

CAROLINA QUARTERLY

Volume 12

1959-1960

Copyright, 1959-60, by the Carolina Quarterly

Printed in U.S.A.

THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY

established with the University Magazine in 1844

Editor	NANCY HELEN COMBS	
Business Manager	TOM PHILLIPS	
Advertising and Publicity Manager	SAM MAUZY	
Assistant Advertising Managers	JOCK FLETCHER, GEORGE VOGEL	
Fiction Editors	TONY BURKE, BILL HEINS	
Poetry Editors	PARKER HODGES, DICK RIEKERT	
Articles Editors	BILL CORPENING, JOHN HARGETT	
General Assistants	ELOISE WALKER, CINDY EGERTON	
Editorial Board	CHARLOTTE BEST	BOB METCALF
	JIM CONAWAY	N. REPPUCCI
	IONE COKER	MIKE REYNOLDS
	BILL CORPENING	JERRY TOGNOLI
	CINDY EGERTON	ELOISE WALKER
	FRANCES PAYNE	AL HORTON
Advisory Board	JESSE REHDER	O. B. HARDISON
	LAMBERT DAVIS	TOM PATTERSON

Copyright 1959 by Carolina Quarterly



THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY publishes short fiction, poetry, reviews, criticism and articles of general interest. Manuscripts and communications to the editors should be addressed to THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY, Box 1117, Chapel Hill, N. C. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.



WASH and WEAR LONDON FOG

...the main coat you need

The weatherman may be wrong, but you're always right in this lightweight LONDON FOG all-weather coat. Smartly tailored of *Calibre Cloth*, an exclusive super blend of Dacron and fine combed cotton...wind, rain, and wrinkle-resistant. Washes in machine or tub... drip dries overnight.

\$29.95

\$4.95 Matching Hat

Milton's Clothing Cupboard

STEVENS-SHEPHERD HOLIDAY HOUSE for DISCRIMINATING DISTINCTIVE GIFTS

CHECK LIST

- MEN'S FINE LEATHER LUGGAGE
- ENGLISH LEATHER &
DUNHILL COSMETICS
- IMPORTED BOTTLE GUARDS
- FLASKS
- COMPLETE BAR KITS
- FANCY SHOE HORNS
- PRINCE GARDNER BILLFOLDS,
KEY CASES, SMALL LEATHER
GOODS
- FITTED BRUSH SETS
- MONOGRAMED HANDKERCHIEFS
- THESE AND HUNDREDS OF
OTHER "DIFFERENT" GIFT
SUGGESTIONS, PLUS AN
OUTSTANDING ARRAY OF MEN'S
CLOTHING & FURNISHINGS.



STEVENS-SHEPHERD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EZRA POUND

Unpublished Letter	5
Extracts from Pound's Broadcasts	9
Notes on the Ezra Pound Matter . by H. A. Sieber	14
Ezra Pound and Anti-Semitism Harry Golden.....	25

POETRY

POEM, January 7, 1958	Kenneth Lawrence Beaudoir ..	28
Ubi Sunt?	Robert Fleissner.....	35
Within Tomorrow	Jim Conaway.....	36
Letter to Kazuko		
c/o Bar Desire	Ralph Dennis.....	48
A Poem as a Personal Toy	Dennis Parks.....	50
The Bright Child Died	Parker Hodges.....	54

FICTION

Bureau-Cat on the Prowl	Howard Wheeler.....	37
Day After Tomorrow	Charles Nisbit.....	56

REVIEWS

The Snopes Trilogy Completed	James Meriwether.....	30
Salinger's Seymour	Ernest Johannson.....	51

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	72
-----------------------------	----





EZRA POUND

(Sketch by La Martinelli)

Unpublished Letter

Extracts from Pound's Broadcasts

Notes on the Ezra Pound Matter

.....H. A. Sieber

Ezra Pound and Anti-Semitism

.....Harry Golden

I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM UNDER
INDICTMENT FOR TREASON

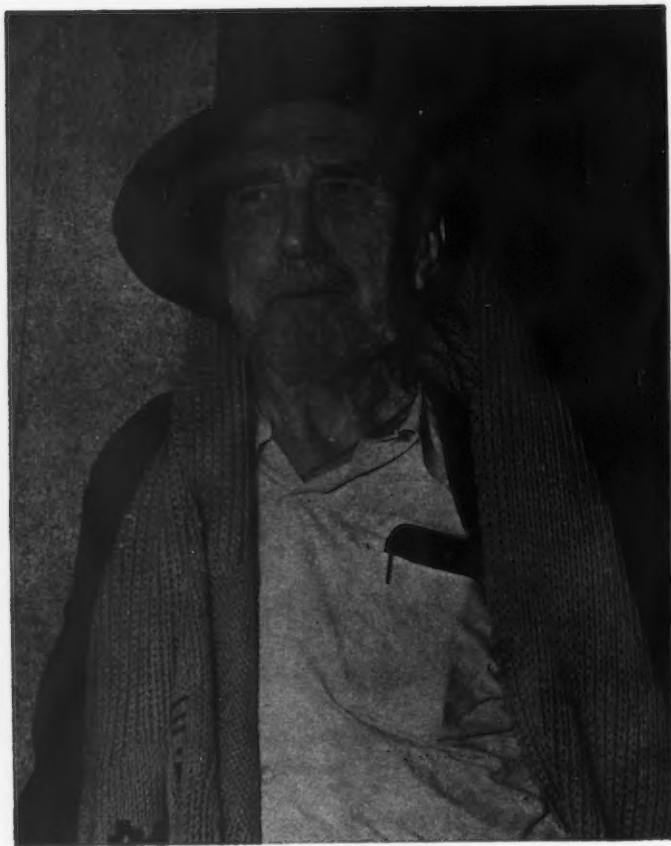
EZRA POUND

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following self-defense was written by Ezra Pound in 1943 after he was indicted for treason by a Washington, D. C. grand jury. Prepared as a letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt's Attorney General Francis Biddle, Pound gave it to the Swiss Delegation at Rome for forwarding. This letter has never been published before, according to H. A. Sieber. However, Mr. Sieber of the Senior Specialists Division, Library of Congress, on March 31, 1958 publicly identified it in an official memorandum to United States Senator Richard Neuberger of Oregon.)

Via Marsala 12-5
Rapallo
August 4, 1943

To Attorney General Biddle
Attorney General of the U. S. A.
Washington, D. C.

I understand that I am under indictment for treason. I have done my best to get an authentic report of your statement to this effect. And I wish to place the following facts before you.



I do not believe that the simple fact of speaking over the radio, wherever placed, can in itself constitute treason. I think that must depend on what is said and on the motives for speaking.

I obtained the concession to speak over Rome radio with the following proviso. Namely that nothing should be asked of me contrary to my duties as an American citizen. I obtained a declaration on their part of a belief in "the free expression of opinion by those qualified to have an opinion."

The legal mind of the Attorney General will understand the interest inherent in this distinction, as from unqualified right of expression.

This declaration was made several times in the announcement of my speeches; with the declaration "He will not be asked to say anything contrary to his duties as an American citizen." ("Citizen of the U. S.")

Those conditions have been adhered to. The only time I had an opinion as to what might be interesting as to subject matter, I was asked whether I would speak on religion. This seemed to me hardly my subject, though I did transmit on one occasion, some passages from Confucius, under the title "The Organum of Confucius."

I have not spoken with regard to THIS war, but in protest against a system which creates one war after another, in series and on system. I have not spoken to the troops, and have not suggested that the troops should mutiny or revolt.

The whole basis of democratic or majority government assumes that the citizens be informed of the facts. I have not claimed to know all the facts, but I have claimed to know some of the facts which are an essential part of the total that should be known to the people.

I have for years believed that the American people should be better informed as to Europe, and informed by men who are not tied to a special interest or under definite control.

The freedom of the press has become a farce, as everyone knows that the press is controlled, if not by its titular owners, at least by the advertisers.

Free speech under modern conditions becomes a mockery if it does not include the right of free speech over the radio.

And this point is worth establishing. The assumption of the right to punish and take vengeance regardless of the area of jurisdiction is dangerous. I do not mean in a small way, but for the nation.

I returned to America before the war to protest against particular forces then engaged in trying to create war and to make sure that the U. S. should be dragged into it. Arthur Kittson's testimony before the Cunliffe and MacMillan commissions was insufficiently known. Brooks Adams brought to light several currents in history that should be better known, and considered in sequence: the suppression of colonial paper money, especially in Pennsylvania. The similar curves following the Napoleonic wars, and our Civil War and Versailles need more attention.

We have not the right to drift into another error similar to that of the Versailles Treaty.

We have, I think, the right to a moderate expansion including defense of the Carribean, the elimination of foreign powers from the American continent, but such expansion should not take place at the cost of deteriorating or ruining the internal structure of the U. S. A. The ruin of markets, the perversion of trade routes, in fact all the matter on which my talks have been based is of importance to the American citizen; whom neither you nor I should betray in time of war OR of peace.

I may say in passing that I took out a life membership in the American Academy of Social and Political Science in the hope of obtaining fuller discussion of some of these issues, but did not find them ready for full and frank expression of certain vital elements in the case, this may in part have been due to their incomprehension of the nature of the case.

At any rate a man's duties increase with his knowledge. A war between the U. S. and Italy is monstrous and should not have occurred. And a peace without justice is not peace but merely a prelude to future wars. Someone must take count of these things. And having taken count must act on his knowledge, admitting that his knowledge is partial and his judgment subject to error.

Very truly yours,
EZRA POUND

EZRA POUND SPEAKING . . .

Extracts from Pound's Broadcasts

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following collection of extracts from Ezra Pound's broadcasts over Radio Rome during World War II, made from the Federal Communications Commission transcripts available on microfilm at the Library of Congress, has been edited by H. A. Sieber.*)

1941

War or No War, Sooner or Later

December 7, 1941

Europe calling . . . Ezra Pound speaking, and I think I am perhaps still speaking a bit more to England than to the United States, but you folks may as well hear it. They say an Englishman's head is made of wood and the American head made of watermelon: easier to get something into the American head, but nigh impossible to make it stick there for ten minutes. Of course, I don't know what good I'm doing, I mean what immediate good, but some things you folks on both sides of the wretched ocean will have to learn, war or no war, sooner or later . . .

My politics seem to be simple . . . I don't cotton to the idea of my country bein' an octopus, weak in the tentacles and suffering from stomach ulcers and colic gastritis . . .

[T]he sooner all America and all England wake up to what the war birds and Roosevelt are up to, the better for the next generation and this one, and as an American, . . . I do not want my compatriots from the ages of 20 to 40 to go get slaughtered to keep up the . . . British Jews rackets in Singapore and Shanghai. This is not my idea of American patriotism. . . .

And a peace, with American war bases all over the whole of the planet, would be no more a real peace than Versailles was . . . And I think it would be well for all men from China to Capetown to see as soon as possible what Franklin is up to. Let him keep his paws on the North American Continent, even if it does mean diminished gun sales for all his pals and all the Goldbergs.

Eight years ago, he was a-sayin' "nothing to fear but fear." Well, what has become of that Roosevelt? What has he done for three years but try to work up an hysteria on that basis?

Well, it is my present intention to say a few words about Mr. Baruch—a Mr. Barney Baruch, the next time I come to this microphone.

1942

Wisdom from the Ancients

January 29, 1942

Ezra Pound again speaking, speaking from Europe. Pearl Arbor Day, or Pearl Harbor Day, at 12:00 noon, I retired from the capital of the old Roman Empire, that is, Rome to Rapallo to seek wisdom from the ancients. I wanted to figure things out. I had perfectly good alibi if I wanted to play things safe. I was and am officially occupied with a new translation of . . . Confucius. I have in Rapallo the text of Confucius and of the ancients, and the text of the world's finest anthology, namely that which Confucius compiled from earlier authors . . .

[T]he United States has been for months . . . and illegally at war, through what I considered to be the criminal acts of a President whose mental condition was not, so far as I could see, all that could be or should be desired of a man in so responsible

a position or office. He has, so far as the evidence to me available showed, broken his promises to his electorates. He had to my mind violated his oath of allegiance to the United States Constitution which even the ordinary American citizen takes every time he gets a passport. It was obviously a mere question of hours between that day and time and the time when the United States would be legally at war with the Axis. I spent a month trying to figure things out. Well, did I?

Perhaps I concluded sooner. At any rate I had a month clear to make up my mind about some things . . .

The United States has been led down the garden path and maybe down under the daisies. All through shutting out news . . .

As my American friend, Senator Borah, is dead, not that I knew him much by letter but I can still feel his hand on my shoulder just before he was getting into an elevator in the Senate building, and I can still hear him saying a couple of days before, saying to me, Borah saying to me: "Well, I'm sure I don't know what a man like you would find to do here." Well, neither he nor William J. Bryan lived to hear Henry Wallace telling the world that there would be no peace till the nations of the world knuckled under and bowed down to the gold standard. Bowed down like drunken and abject fools and then let gold rule humanity. To let all human exchange of goods be bottlenecked through gold. And before you can swap cheese for mutton or serge for wheat, bow down and say "monopoly is God over all men." . . . Back in December I had never expected such a confession from anyone so high in office.

Yet I knew that this was what the war was about . . . gold, usury, and monopoly. . . .

[I]t is my private belief that I could have avoided the war with Japan, if anyone had the unlikely idea of sending me out there with any thought of official powers. . . .

I think the alliance with Stalin's Russia is rotten. . . . The day Hitler went into Russia, England had her chance to pull out. She had her chance to say, "Let bygones be bygones. If you can stop this Muscovite order, we will let bygones be bygones." . . . Instead of which, Hank Wallace comes up saying no peace till the world accepts the gold standard. . . .

Does look like there was a weakness of mind in some quarters. Whom God would destroy he first sends to the bughouse.

Prospect of a 30 Years' War

February 3, 1942

[A] prospect of a 30 years' war is not one to arouse mirth and hilarity, even in a flighty chickenhearted and irresponsible people such as the United States of Americans. You are in it and Lord knows who is it trying to get you out. . . .

A way to get yourselves out might be discoverable. It might be more discoverable if you first had a faint inkling of a curiosity as to how you got yourselves in. . . . I would lay it down as an axiom that empires do not get knocked apart from outside until they are plumb gone to rot in the middle. . . .

[P]olitically and economically speaking, the United States has had economic and political syphilis for the past 80 years, ever since 1863. And England has had economic syphilis for 240 years. . . . Are there 10 men in America ready to go back over the events of the past few years in America and England?

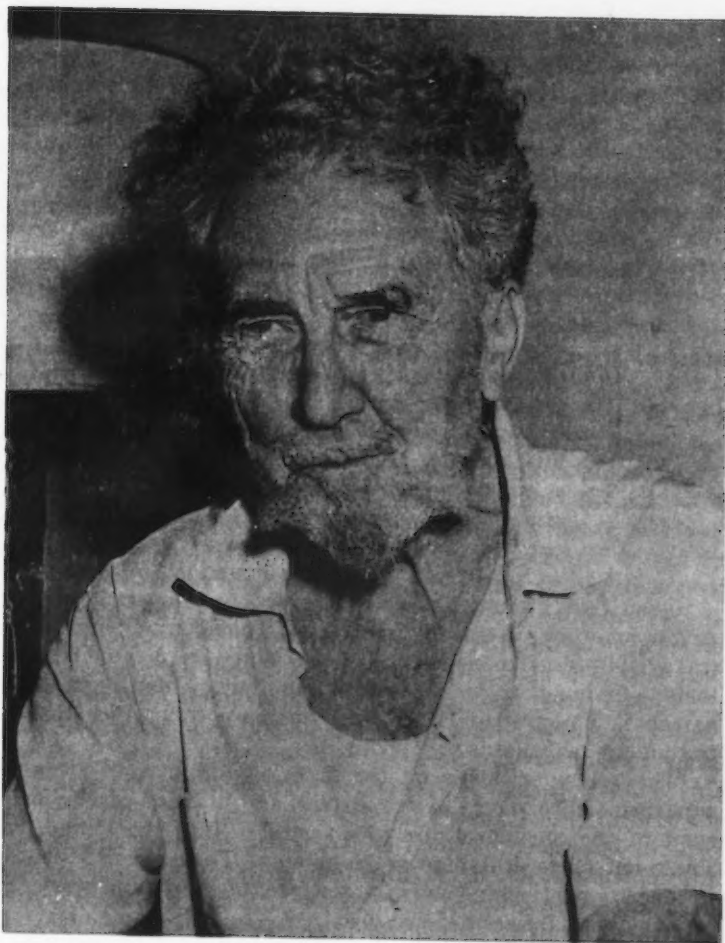
And when you think, if you do think, of the billions that have been lended by the Morgenthau Treasury policy during the past nine years of peacetime, God knows what it will be during war time. And by the end, shall we say, 30 years.

Well, you are now in. And nobody can get you out . . . With unspeakable vulgarity, you have insulted the most finely tempered people on earth. Threatened them with starvation, threatening them with encirclement, and telling them they were too low-down to fight. You are at war for the duration of the Germans' pleasure. You are at war for the duration of Japan's pleasure. Nothing in the western world, nothing in the whole of our Occident can help you to dodge that. Nothing can help you dodge it. I could go on along this line for some time but maybe I have said enough for one evening.

For the American Heritage

March 26, 1942

Are you fighting for the national heritage? For the heritage of wisdom, the heritage of Washington and of Monroe, and of John Adams and Lincoln. I say you are not. You are fighting against what all these men stood for, and it will take more brains that I got to get you out of it prettily. Ezra Pound speaking from Europe for the American heritage.



EZRA POUND AT ST. ELIZABETH'S

THE AGE DEMANDED AN IMAGE

Notes from the Ezra Pound Matter

*It has been your habit for long to do away with
good writers,
You either drive them mad, or else you blink at
their suicides,
Or else you condone their drugs, and talk of
insanity and genius,
But I will not go mad to please you.*

—Ezra Pound in "Personae"

That Ezra Pound holds an irrevocably important place in Anglo-American literature is certain. That Ezra Pound's political activity during the Second World War has momentarily distorted our image of his posture in our literary history cannot be gainsaid. The probability is that Pound's poetry will outlive his prejudices, and that is as it should be.

The following notes on the Ezra Pound matter present a superficial chronology of his career and a brief discussion of some of the considerations which entered into the Pound case. These notes are presented as fragments. They are not intended to reflect a particular view of any aspect of the Pound story. The controversies are yet to be resolved.

Pound was born seventy-four years ago in the mining town of Hailey, Idaho. His father was with the United States land office there. His paternal grandfather was Thaddeus Coleman Pound, a member of Congress from Wisconsin. A distant relative, by way of his mother, was poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Grandfather Thaddeus had told the Congress three years before Ezra's birth—arguing for aid to the American Indian—"Give them spades in place of powder, plows in place of guns, opportunity rather than hymns and prayers. Encourage citizenship. . . ." Last year Pound suggested that his grandfather "was asking for the same things I am asking for in very much the same style."

At the age of fifteen young Ezra entered the University of Pennsylvania and a year later, "to avoid irrelevant subjects," he enrolled as a special student. At Pennsylvania, he met and befriended William Carlos Williams. In 1904, Williams wrote his mother:

Pound is a fine fellow; he is the essence of optimism and has a cast-iron faith that is something to admire . . . he is just the man for me. But not one person in a thousand likes him, and a great many people detest him and why? Because he is so darned full of conceits and affectation. . . . His friends must be all patience in order to find him out and even then you must not let him know it, for he will immediately put on some artificial mood and be really unbearable. It is too bad, for he loves to be liked, yet there is some quality which makes him too proud to try to please people. I am sure his only fault is an exaggeration of a trait that in itself is good and in every way admirable. He is afraid of being taken in if he trusts his really tender heart to mercies of a cruel crowd and so keeps it hidden and trusts no one. Oh, what a common fault it is—this false pride.

At eighteen, Ezra transferred to Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, where his work was, according to one faculty member, "brilliant but erratic." Graduated at twenty, he took his master's degree the next year, went to Europe to do research for a paper on the Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega and in 1907 went to Wabash College in Indiana to teach. At Wabash, one of his student was Thurman Arnold, who, half a century later, was to serve as his defense attorney in the case of *United States vs. Ezra Pound*.

He did not stay at Wabash very long, having been dismissed from the faculty, because he was "of the Latin Quarter type," charged with "unconventionality," "bohemianism," and other more ambiguous misdemeanors, as Pound later satirically re-

called, against "a town with literary traditions." It seems that the young Wabash instructor had given shelter to a young lady in his boarding-house room. Thurman Arnold summarized the rumors which followed Pound's departure from Wabash, "that he left because of roomers."

Pound took off for Europe, as he recalled later, "as soon as motion was autarchic." His first book was published in Venice in 1908. In London and Paris, he befriended and helped many writers, including Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats, James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway, and earned a reputation as a poet and critic of the first order.

In 1925, Pound moved from Paris to Rapallo, Italy, a resort on the Ligurian Riviera. There he composed music, wrote on music, poetry and economics, delivered lectures, arranged concerts and continued writing his epic *Cantos*.

In 1939 he came to the United States for the first time in three decades "to prevent World War II." Pound's self-appointed peace mission to America failed. Upon returning to Italy, he continued his bitter denunciation of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the American educational system, Jewish "usurers," Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and bad poetry.

In January, 1941, he began broadcasting over Radio Rome about literary and economic matters. On Pearl Harbor Day, apparently unaware of the Japanese attack on the United States, Pound declared:

I think I am perhaps still speaking a bit more to England than to the United States, but you folks may as well hear it . . . war or no war, sooner or later. . . . My politics seem to be simple . . . I don't cotton to my country bein' an octopus, weak in the tentacles and suffering from stomach ulcers and colic gastritis. . . . Eight years ago, he (Roosevelt) was a-sayin' 'nothing to fear but fear.' Well, what has become of that Roosevelt? What has he done but try to work up an hysteria on that basis?

Later that day, he saw American correspondent Reynolds Packard who told him that, now that America was at war, staying in Italy would make Pound a traitor. Replied the poet: "I have nothing against the United States. I consider myself a 100 percent American and a patriot. I am only against Roosevelt and the Jews who influence him." Packard, when he wrote about

the incident in his book *Balcony Empire*, published in 1942, described Pound as suffering from a severe inferiority complex.

Pound temporarily stopped broadcasting. A month and a half after Pearl Harbor, he resumed the broadcasts. He announced over the air that he had spent the previous weeks seeking wisdom "from the ancients. I wanted to figure this out."

Pound's broadcasts were now carefully prefixed with an announcer's preamble that the Italian radio,

acting in accordance with the Fascist policy of intellectual freedom and free expression of opinion by those who are qualified to hold it, following the tradition of Italian hospitality, has offered Dr. Ezra Pound the use of the microphone twice a week. It is understood that he will not be asked to say anything whatsoever that goes against his conscience or anything incompatible with his duties as a citizen of the United States of America.

In that radio talk of January 29, 1942, Pound charged that the United States had been "for months . . . illegally at war through what I considered to be the criminal acts of a President whose mental condition was not, so far as I could see, all that could or should be desired of a man in so responsible a position or office. . . . The United States has been led down the garden path and maybe ended under the daisies. All through shutting out the news."

Whatever axes or axioms Pound had to grind in his broadcasts, it is clear that he did not always sound intelligible. His reasoning was not always apparent, and when it was, his choice of words was systematically extreme, if not reckless.

On the reliability of the transcripts of the broadcasts, critic Hugh Kenner has commented: "It does not appear that he said anything that would have been treason had he said it in the United States Senate. What he did say is difficult to discover, the indictment being publicly supported only by transcripts of grotesque unreliability."

There are, of course, many instances where Pound's rambling, often disconnected thoughts, liberally sprinkled with obscure literary, historical and personal references, must have baffled the Federal Communications Commission clerk who transcribed the monitored broadcasts.

It has been reported (but not confirmed) that the Italians themselves were so baffled by some of the broadcasts that they were constantly on the alert to the possibility that he might be sending secret code messages to the United States.

The fact remains, however, that the broadcasts were made, and despite the errors in the transcript, it can hardly be argued that Pound did make radio talks which were highly critical of the Roosevelt Administration.

On July 26, 1943, a District of Columbia grand jury indicted Pound and seven other Americans who were broadcasting from Italy and Germany. Only two of the eight were ever convicted; indictments against three of them were dismissed for insufficient evidence in view of the decisions of the Supreme Court in the Haupt and Cramer cases.

In the Cramer case, the Supreme Court asserted: "The crime of treason consists of two elements, both of which must be present in order to sustain a conviction: (1) adherence to the enemy, and (2) rendering him aid and comfort. . . . The acts done must be intentional. The intent sufficient to sustain a conviction of treason must be an intent not merely to commit the overt acts complained of, but to betray the country by means of such acts."

Upon hearing that he had been indicted, Pound addressed a letter to Attorney General Francis Biddle protesting that he had not spoken "with regard to this war, but in protest against a system which creates one war after another in series and on system." He had not spoken to the troops, he avowed, nor had he suggested that the troops should mutiny or revolt. He concluded his self-defense by saying that he acted on whatever knowledge was available to him, "admitting that such knowledge was partial and his judgment subject to error."

On May 5, 1945, Pound surrendered near Genoa. He was sent to the Disciplinary Training Center near Pisa, where he was put in a specially constructed grilled "security cage." A training officer at the center, now stationed at the Pentagon recently commented, "I never heard anything other than the fact that Pound was cooperative and that is why I think he was moved out of the cage."

Why he was put in the cage in the first place is still a matter for speculation. As one of the jailers at the center recollected last year, the other prisoners considered Pound with awe, "tak-

ing the reinforced cage as evidence that he was a particularly tough customer."

After seven months of being held virtually incommunicado at the training center, in November, 1945, Pound was returned to the United States where he was re-indicted on nineteen "overt acts of treason." The grand jurors heard seven Italian witnesses charge that they had seen him make "anti-Allied" broadcasts in violation of (his) duty of allegiance, knowingly, intentionally, willfully, feloniously, traitorously and treasonably did adhere to the enemies of the United States."

When Pound arrived in Washington for the trial, he asked reporters: "Does anyone really know what I said? . . . Get rid of the notion that I betrayed anybody."

He stood mute on arraignment and a plea of not guilty was entered by the court. On December 4, 1945, Pound was admitted to Gallinger Hospital, and ten days later, after extensive psychiatric examination by Dr. Winfred Overholser and three other doctors, he was declared by them to be "insane and mentally unfit for trial."

The text of the letter from the four psychiatrists dated December 14, 1945, follows:

The undersigned hereby respectfully report the results of their mental examination of Ezra Pound, now detained in Gallinger Hospital by transfer for observation from the District Jail on a charge of treason. Three of us (Drs. Gilbert, King, and Overholser) were appointed by your Honor to make this examination. At our suggestion, and with your approval, Dr. Wendell Muncie, acting upon the request of counsel for the accused, made an examination with us and associated himself with us in this joint report. Dr. Muncie spent several hours with the defendant, both alone and with us, on December 13, 1945, and the others of us have examined the defendant each on several occasions, separately and together, in the period from his admission to Gallinger Hospital on December 4, 1945 to December 13, 1945. We have had available to us the reports of laboratory, psychological and special physical examinations of the defendant and considerable material in the line of his writings and biographical data.

The defendant, now 60 years of age and in generally good physical condition, was a precocious student, specializing in literature. He has been a voluntary expatriate for nearly 40 years, living in England and France, and for the past 21 years in Italy, making an uncertain living by writing poetry and criticism. His poetry and literary criticism have achieved considerable recognition, but of recent years his preoccupation with monetary theories and economics has apparently

obstructed his literary productivity. He has long been recognized as eccentric, querulous, and egocentric.

At the present time he exhibits extremely poor judgment as to his situation, its seriousness and the manner in which the charges are to be met. He insists that his broadcasts were not treasonable, but that all of his radio activities have stemmed from his self-appointed mission to "save the Constitution." He is abnormally grandiose, is expansive and exuberant in manner, exhibiting pressure of speech, discursiveness, and distractibility.

In our opinion, with advancing years his personality, for many years abnormal, has undergone further distortion to the extent that he is now suffering from a paranoid state which renders him mentally unfit to advise properly with counsel or to participate intelligently and reasonably in his own defense. He is, in other words, insane and mentally unfit for trial, and in need of care in a mental hospital.

On January 18, 1946, the Court heard and granted a motion for a formal statutory inquisition to determine Mr. Pound's sanity.

The four psychiatrists, who signed the above letter, testified before the inquisition on February 13, 1946, that Mr. Pound was mentally incompetent to stand trial.

The jury retired to consider its verdict, and three minutes later returned with the finding that Ezra Pound was of unsound mind.

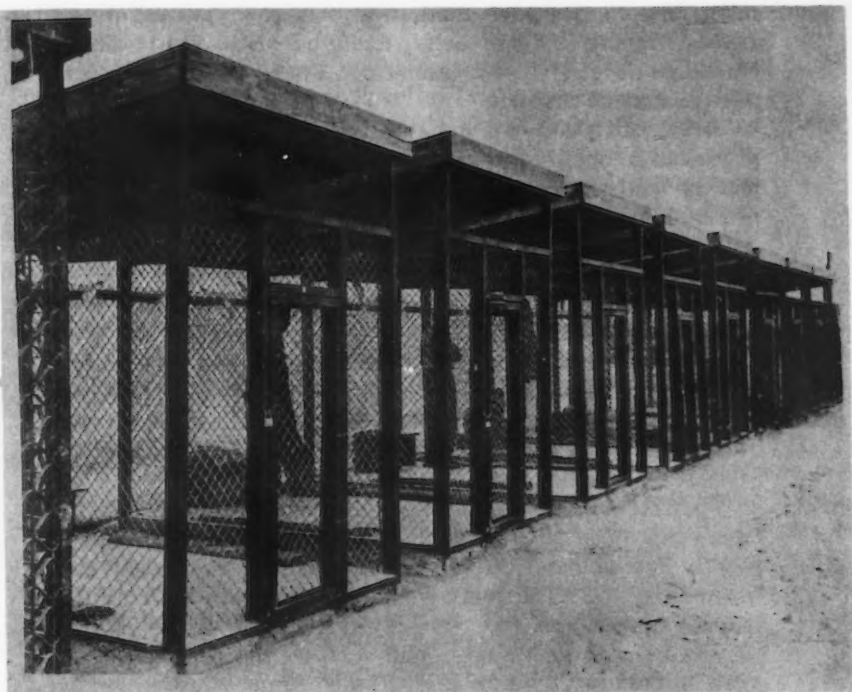
Following the verdict, Mr. Pound was committed to the custody of the United States and was confined in St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D. C.

Mr. Pound was placed in a criminal lunatic ward at St. Elizabeth's, but in 1947, following an unsuccessful motion for bail, he was removed to Center Building where he was quartered until his release last year.

During the period Mr. Pound was incarcerated at St. Elizabeth's, he continued to write poetry and to receive visitors, including his wife, Dorothy Shakespear Pound, who lived a few blocks from the hospital in southeast Washington.

In 1949, Mr. Pound was awarded the Library of Congress-Bollingen prize of \$1000 for "the highest achievement of American poetry in 1948," his *Pisan Cantos*. Mr. Pound has been selected for the award by a jury of Fellows of the Library of Congress in American Letters. This award created quite a furor because the recipient poet was an "accused traitor."

Robert Hillyer, in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, wrote:



This photograph shows the security cages at the Disciplinary Training Center near Pisa where Pound was held prisoner after his 1945 surrender to the United States Government. His cage (to the extreme left) was especially reinforced.

"It is ironic that among the conditions for the Award is the stipulation that the recipient must be an American citizen. By some tenuous legality, he may be a citizen, but he knows nothing and cares less about civil obligations. . . . The 1949 Bollingen Award is a permanent disgrace."

Even Radio Moscow got into the act, commenting: "One is prompted to ask, how low and miserable must be the quality of modern bourgeois poetry in America if even the insane and verified ravings of a confessed madman could win a literary prize?"

The Librarian of Congress, Luther H. Evans, in a letter to the *Saturday Review*, said:

In my many years of study and teaching in the field of political science, I came to regard a political test for art and poetry as a sign of dictatorial, illiberal, undemocratic approach to matters of the mind . . . I do not feel that it would be proper for me to override the judgment of persons . . . charged with the responsibility to make the judgment (to select the Bollingen prizewinner.)

The Library discontinued its sponsorship of this poetry prize, Pound continued to be famous as a poet, but more and more frequently he was described in the press as the "mad poet" or the "insane traitor." The years went by, aging both Pound and the charges against him.

When, three years ago, John Kasper, the propagandist for white supremacy, now in prison, was "connected" with Pound because of Kasper's visits to St. Elizabeth's, Pound again received public attention. However, despite this renewed public interest, efforts toward Pound's release were sporadic and ineffectual. The apathy indicated the general view that "an ounce of detention" continued to be "worth the cure of Pound."

When the District Court records of the Pound case were examined in September, 1957, the docket was marked with a rubber stamp, "Case Closed." The clerk's entry on the docket was clearly an error but very few Americans knew the difference.

Back in February, Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot and Ernest Hemingway had written the Attorney General that "perpetuation of charges" against Ezra Pound was "unfortunate," "indefensible," "unworthy of the traditions of the Republic." In October, Mary de Rachewiltz, Pound's daughter who lived with her husband in Merano, Italy, once more wrote authorities, requesting her

father's release, stating that she had waited twelve years "for something to happen." In December, the Attorney General, William Rogers, agreed more or less that the Justice Department would quash the indictment under certain conditions, including Pound's transfer to a private hospital. Undersecretary of State Christian Herter wrote Dr. Winfred Overholser, the superintendent at St. Elizabeth's, in January that he wanted to discuss "this difficult individual" about whom Dag Hammarskjöld had written him. Mrs. Pound assured Dr. Overholser that her husband had "no political views about contemporary Italy and would take at least ten years to develop any—hardly likely at 82 years." Behind the scenes there was hope among some and yet considerable official doubt that the Pound case would be resolved so soon.

In August, 1957, several Members of Congress had requested the Library of Congress to undertake a study of the "medical, political, literary, and legal aspects" of the Pound case. Congressman Usher Burdick of North Dakota introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives calling for a "full and complete investigation and study" of the Ezra Pound question. The initial Library study was complete in March, 1958.

On April 1, 1958, the Attorney General made his public statement on the matter asking "Is there point in keeping him if he can never be tried?" Four days later, the Washington, D. C., law firm announced that, in "the public interest, without a fee, following a request by Robert Frost," it had agreed to represent Mrs. Pound in Pound's behalf.

On April 18, attorney Thurman Arnold appeared before the United States District Court of the District of Columbia, the same judge presiding who had sent Pound to St. Elizabeth's in 1946. The U. S. Attorney Oliver Gasch agreed that Pound would never be able to stand trial and consented to the motion to dismiss the indictment. The case was closed, and Pound sailed to Italy on the Cristoforo Colombo.

Robert Frost's statement to the Court in April summarizes the view which the editorial writers generally took during the days immediately preceding and following the hearing before Judge Laws:

I am here to register my admiration for a government that can rouse in conscience to a case like this. Relief seems in sight for many of us besides the Ezra Pound in question and his faithful wife. He has countless admirers the world over who will

rejoice in the news that he has hopes of freedom. . . . I myself speak as much in the general interest as in his. And I feel authorized to speak very specially for my friends, Archibald MacLeish, Ernest Hemingway and T. S. Eliot. None of us can bear the disgrace of our letting Ezra Pound come to his end where he is. It would leave too woeful a story in American literature. He went very wrongheaded in his egotism, but he insists it was from patriotism—love of America. He has never admitted that he went over to the enemy any more than the writers at home who have despaired of the Republic. I hate such nonsense and can only listen to it as an evidence of mental disorder. But mental disorder is what we are considering. I rest the case on Dr. Overholser's pronouncement that Ezra Pound is not too dangerous to go free in his wife's care, and too insane ever to be tried—a very nice discrimination.

Mr. Thurman Arnold admirably put this problem of a sick man being held too long in prison to see if he won't get well enough to be tried for a prison offense. There is probably legal precedent to help toward a solution of the problem. But I should think it would have to be reached more by magnanimity than by logic and it is chiefly on magnanimity I am counting. I can see how the Department of Justice would hesitate in the matter from fear of looking more just to a great poet than it would be to a mere nobody. The bigger the Department the longer it might have to take thinking things through.



H. A. SIEBER wrote the 1958 Library of Congress report on Ezra Pound after spending two years on the staff of the Library of Congress Senior Specialists Division. Mr. Sieber was named special staff assistant to United States Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska. He left Senator Gruening this past summer to return to Chapel Hill where he is now doing public relations for Danziger enterprises. Sieber is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and a former poetry editor of the *Carolina Quarterly*.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *HARRY GOLDEN*, author of *ONLY IN AMERICA* and *FOR 2¢ PLAIN* has revised the following article for the *Carolina Quarterly* from his newspaper the *Carolina Israelite*.)

HARRY GOLDEN

EZRA POUND AND ANTI-SEMITISM

If I had been asked to serve on the committee which last year helped free the poet Ezra Pound from St. Elizabeth's Hospital (for the insane), I would have signed the petition. I would have signed it with a special kind of smile. I would have thought to myself, ah, if the same amount of space which was devoted in the Congressional Record to this *one* man had been accorded, in correct proportion, to the *six million* Jewish men, women, and children who were massacred in Europe, the Congressional Record would have stretched from here to the moon. But I am not mad at Robert Frost, even if he did leave us holding the bag with Herman Wouk, which is something. But the joke may be on them, on Robert Frost and Ezra Pound, because I have a sneaking suspicion that Anne Frank, a 13-year old school girl, will outlive them both by at least a millenium. I'm sorry, but that's the way it seems to work. The world is full of such tricks.

But now I'd like to discuss the poet as an anti-Semite, the anti-Semitism of a genius, a genius such as Ezra Pound.

One of the anti-Semitic journals which I receive regularly had an article in it last Spring in which it "exposes" the Jews for having caused the incarceration of Ezra. "The Jews have the political power." "All of this," says this journal, "came about through the Jewish control of the Roosevelt-Truman and Eisenhower administration." Thus this Jewish "power" was influential enough to jail Ezra Pound but became suddenly helpless in trying to force even a little dent in the McCarran-Walters Immigration Act. But as I have told you a million times this anti-Semitism involves the complete renunciation of logic and its magic as a formula rests on this very thing—no logic can possibly prevail against it.

It would come as a great surprise to many people, who are concerned with the libel which links the Jews and the Communists, if they read the literature of the beginning of our industrial revolution and the burgeoning of the new middle classes of Europe and America. They would be surprised to read that the intellectual anti-Semites wrote so bitterly of the Jews because they said the Jews had "invented" capitalism, and that the Jews had created the spark which gave momentum to the growth of the middle class.

That noble man Brooks Adams, of one of the first families of America, spent his declining years writing in bitterness about the Jew because he said they had destroyed his world of "knights, peasants, and artisans".

And it is pertinent to speak of Brooks Adams when we discuss the anti-Semitism of Ezra Pound. Basically it was a revolt against *what is*, and the Jew, (contemporaneous with all of history) bears identity with every social upheaval in the history of human progression. Ezra Pound, no less than Brooks Adams, was in revolt against the world he loved; the world of knights, artisans, and peasants; and it is no coincidence that Ezra Pound too had come from the Populist background.

Tom Watson of Georgia and other Populists proved how easy it was to go from "the people" to anti-Semitism. This phenomenon has been demonstrated to us in reverse, in our own time; the need for the confessed Communists to become Roman Catholics; for them no "half-way" house. It is impossible! Voltaire, Brooks Adams, Tom Watson, and Ezra Pound could have escaped their anti-Semitism *only* in the bosom of the Roman church—but they couldn't do it. It was a matter of either—or, with them. Ezra Pound's anti-Semitism went a bit deeper than Voltaire's. Voltaire was expressing his hatred for Christianity as an institution; Pound was expressing his hatred for America. "Behind England," cried Adolph Hitler, "stands World Jewry." "Behind Roosevelt," said Ezra Pound, "stands World Jewry."

It is interesting to note this about the Populism of Ezra Pound and Tom Watson. The South had been the area of the greatest philo-Semitism on this continent. The Anglo-Saxon-Calvinist tradition was steeped in Judaism, but the first sign of anti-Semitism came from the Populists. In their anger against

the "bankers" they were able to concretize their fears in the symbol of the JEW. *What is*, at the intellectual level of Ezra Pound and Tom Watson, was the revolt against the break-up of their agrarian civilization, that now they would find so many "middlemen" that they would lose their own status as liaison between the aristocrat and the peasantry; and how they both loved that peasantry. They loved the dear peasants for themselves alone and bristled with hate and anger at the mere mention of "subsidy" or "minimum wage."

The petitions to free Ezra Pound included expressions from many of our most noble people. It is no coincidence that I liked Paul Green's and Carl Sandburg's best of all. Both of these men are not only my neighbors in North Carolina, but also my devoted friends. Paul Green, the number-one liberal of my state, bespoke the common sense tradition of Anglo-Calvinist Liberalism; "Let him out of the insane asylum, but it is time the old bastard were dead." And Carl Sandburg with his Talmudic Swedishness, (what a combination) and the virtue of *kindness*; because Carl Sandburg is the *kindest* man I have ever known in my life; and so I embrace Carl Sandburg and Paul Green, and as we clasp hands, lo and behold we find this Ezra Pound in the middle, and this is good. This is the true Humanism.

Postscript

I always experience a moment of pride when I thumb through the file boxes of the New York Public Library marked, "Anti-Semitic Writings." There are three full boxes containing some 6,000 titles. The anti-Semites who rant about how the "Jews own New York" do not know about these file boxes of course. A library to an anti-Semite is what holy water is to the devil. Thus, if posterity refuses to share T. S. Eliot's opinion of Ezra Pound as a poet, the grizzled old psychopath can at least be assured of immortality in those file boxes on the shelves of the New York Public Library and in the archives of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations where the Jews make certain to preserve every anti-Semitic expression that has ever appeared in print—anywhere—and in five different languages, too; and how wonderful this is.

POEM, January 7, 1958
(for Ezra Pound)

I've heard that even Rome is chill
in January,
the birds querulous at the fountains,
travellers a little pale,
hungry,
hurrying to some restaurant.

It is so here too. . . .
but deep inside America
one learns where the rendezvous are,
the places one must go
to warm at the fire of conversation,
exchange a gesture
if not a comment,

And perhaps King Wen did well
to write the Book of Changes,
the duke of Chou, well,
to have added to it,
and Mencius,
and Confucius. . . .
what Baptists they were!

So when January eats in your bones
even in Rome
how do you warm yourself?
. . . . who are the well,
or the cauldron
for the times. . . .

Perhaps one is luckier to be born
a Spaniard like Jimenez,
than a metropolitan—
but who can say
now we have closed
our lips
and confess such things
as we may love
by only the merest flicker
of an eye.

—KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN

THE SNOPEs TRILOGY COMPLETED

Faulkner has done it again. In *THE MANSION*, the concluding volume of his Snopes trilogy, he surprises us once more with the unexpected, by writing a book that differs from any book he has written before. Not one of his greatest books, *THE MANSION*, nevertheless, is a fine one, and it brings a satisfying close to one of his greatest achievements, the whole story of Flem Snopes and the Snopes tribe.

The origins of the Snopes trilogy go back to the beginning of Faulkner's career as a novelist, when he and Phil Stone, a friend in Oxford, Mississippi, began working up a series of tall tales about the rise to power in the twentieth-century South of a ruthless backwoods opportunist, Flem Snopes, and his improbably named kinsmen. *THE HAMLET* (1940) traced Flem's rise to dominance in the tiny Yoknapatawpha County community of Frenchman's Bend. In *THE TOWN* (1957) Flem moved on to Jefferson, the county seat, and there rose, step by ruthless step, to the presidency of the bank and control of the town. In *THE HAMLET* there had been little successful opposition to him; in *THE TOWN* he encountered stronger resistance; *THE MANSION* is the story of the fate which finally overtook him.

No redeeming qualities of decency weaken Flem's course from beginning to end toward money and power. The opposition in the drama of this trilogy comes from sources outside its chief figure. The once-dominant aristocracy, such as the Sartoris and Compson families, who are being supplanted in Yoknapatawpha County by the rise of the "rednecks," contribute little to that opposition, which is centered instead in the professional middle class, represented by the lawyer Gavin Stevens and by several elements in Flem's own family. Flem had found his kinsmen indispensable to his early success, using their clan loyalty to

serve his own ends in Frenchman's Bend, but they were less use to him in Jefferson. In *THE HAMLET* and *THE TOWN*, the appearance of an occasional decent Snopes, like Eck or his son, Wallstreet Panic, represented a threat to Flem's progress. The final agent of Flem's doom, however, comes not from the outsiders whom he has victimized, nor from the men of good will who oppose him on principle, nor even from the good Snopeses whom he cannot manage. Nemesis for Flem is personified in the bitter and implacable figure of his cousin Mink, and *THE MANSION* is Mink's book.

In this lies the unexpectedness of *THE MANSION*. It is not surprising that the agent of Flem's destruction should be Mink, who has been a loaded pistol aimed at Flem since *THE HAMLET* when Mink was under indictment for murder and expected Flem to help him. What is surprising is that so much of *THE MANSION* is devoted to Mink, and the manner in which Faulkner presents him. Deadly as a rattlesnake, deprived of most of the opportunities which most authors would use to create sympathy for a character, Mink is not only one of Faulkner's most masterful characterizations, but the subject of the most strongly compassionate treatment which Faulkner has yet given a character in his fiction. The grinding poverty of Mink's sharecropper background, the warped and terrible pride which sustains him in that poverty—these emerge in a far different fashion from the passionate and striking aloofness with which the younger Faulkner treated his humanity. Most of the major characters of the book—Flem and Mink, Gavin Stevens and V. K. Ratliff—are in their sixties, as is Faulkner himself.

There is a warm autumnal radiance in *THE MANSION*, a serenity in the sense that Faulkner gives here of his love for and pride in the people of his imagination, a feeling that is so overt that we can call it a new departure in his work.

It is hard to generalize about Faulkner's work. Nearly everything that is true about any individual book can be contradicted by citing others. He is unmatched among the American novelists of his time in the quantity of his serious work, though others may equal him in a few of their works or exceed him in the number of his. But Faulkner's work (more than a score of separate books of fiction) defies the kind of analysis that generally succeeds with other writers. Despite the obvious similarities in

themes and techniques, locale and characters, of a substantial portion of his output, his individual works are, in the final analysis, relentlessly and fundamentally different. Even in the Snopes trilogy, the three volumes differ widely in nearly every respect. *THE HAMLET* is one of his greatest creations—for me one of his two best (with *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*). *THE TOWN* is a lesser work, shorter and less memorable, though successful on its own terms. (It had a generally bad press; too many reviewers expected another *THE HAMLET*, and were disappointed.) It falls into better perspective when seen as the middle volume of the trilogy between two larger works. *THE MANSION*, too, makes better sense as part of the trilogy than by itself. Faulkner's method has not been just to add a new novel to his two previous ones, to extend the story of Snopesism and Flem Snopes. Instead he has gone back to fill out the picture in much of *THE MANSION*, to deepen or extend the range of *THE HAMLET* and *THE TOWN*, even to make changes in their stories. Much of the action of *THE MANSION* overlaps that of *THE HAMLET*—or rather underlies it, and the reader closely familiar with Faulkner is in danger of impatience with the frequent recapitulations of the stories of the other two Snopes novels, and annoyance with the discrepancies between the new version and the version he remembers. However, Faulkner has an explicit answer for such a reader; in a preliminary note, he warns that he has now lived with these characters for more than thirty years, and as he has gotten to know them better he has sometimes changed his mind about them. The explicit quality of the note is part of the change in Faulkner marked by this book—it is hard to imagine the Faulkner of twenty years ago bothering to explain himself to the reader.

To call it Mink's book is to oversimplify *THE MANSION*, of course; no Faulkner book is a one man or one character book, not even *ABSALOM, ABSALOM!*, which comes closest to it. On one level, *THE MANSION* brings Snopesism up to date, carries the ramifications of the family up to the end of World War II. (*THE HAMLET* ended about 1908, *THE TOWN* about 1929.) And though Flem's story does not change, that of Linda Snopes, the daughter of Flem's wife Eula, does, and she is important to the working out of Flem's doom. This is a long novel, and episodic in structure, like the other two Snopes novels, and

many new minor characters and several old ones fill out the action of the episodes. As is true of any Faulkner novel, these turn out to be closely connected with each other and to the meaning of the book as a whole. Thematically, however, these episodes often serve no useful end as far as the basic plot of action of the novel is concerned. They give the book a richness and fullness, although I could wish that two or three of them had been omitted; in some, like Ratliff's Rabelaisian account of the defeat of Clarence Snopes in a state election, Faulkner's imagination is working at convincing intensity, but others, like the encounter of Mink with an ex-Marine fundamentalist preacher, fail to sustain their length despite the subtlety of their thematic connection with the main action of the book. These remain minor disappointments in a work of major satisfactions, however, and in Faulkner such seeming discrepancies have a way of disappearing on further acquaintance. The action of the novel is Mink's course in his revenge upon Flem; the meaning comes from Faulkner's attitude toward him and toward Flem. Impoverished sharecroppers regrettably given to violence are an old story in American fiction by now. Much of the plot of *THE MANSION* might be summarized to sound like typical Erskine Caldwell. But another aspect of the novel suggests a very different way of treating the rural South, a way that in the twentieth century has been better exemplified by the theories of the Agrarians than in the practice of most Southern writers. In this novel the land appears on almost the same terms as do the characters whose destinies it shapes, and with something of the same ambivalence. Faulkner has used the land, in this narrow sense, in this way before, most notably in *Go Down Moses*. But examples will best show his practice here. Mink, working a crop in the state prison farm, thinks:

You got me, you'll wear me out because you are stronger than me since I'm jest bone and flesh. I cant leave you because I cant afford to, and you know it. Me and what used to be the passion and excitement of my youth until you wore out the youth and I forgot the passion for you to wear that much nearer the grave, and you know it; and the year after that, and the year after that, and you know that too. And not just me, but all my tenant and cropper kind that have immolated youth and hope on thirty or forty or fifty acres of dirt that wouldn't nobody but our kind work because you're all our kind have. But we can burn you. Every late February or March we can set fire to the surface of you until all of you in sight is scorched

and black, and there aint one gad-damn thing you can do about it. You can wear out our bodies and dull our dreams and wreck our stomachs with the sow-belly and corn meal and molasses which is all you can afford us to eat but every spring we can set you afire again and you know that too.

And when Mink got out of prison:

It was fall, almost October, and he discovered that here was something else he had forgotten about during the thirty-eight years: seasons. They came and went in the penitentiary too but for thirty-eight years the only right he had to them was the privilege of suffering because of them. . . . But now they belonged to him again. . . . back in the hills, all the land would be gold and crimson with hickory and gum and oak and maple, and the old fields warm with sage and splattered with scarlet sumac.

Mink's thoughts about sleeping, and the danger of yielding to the earth:

That was the danger, what a man had to watch against: once you laid flat on the ground, right away the earth started to draw you down into it. The very moment you were born out of your mother's body, the power and drag of the earth was already at work on you; if there had not been other womenfolks in the family or neighbors. . . . to support you, hold you up, keep the earth from touching you, you would not live an hour. And you knew it too.

The ending of the book, where Mink lies down at last and yields to the earth would suffer badly in being quoted out of context, but one must emphasize the rightness of the conclusion, not only for Mink, but for the whole trilogy. In *THE HAMLET* and *THE TOWN* the bitterness of making a living on the land drove Flem Snopes to the most despicable kind of commercialism. To get away from the land he embraces the most ugly aspects of laissezfaire capitalism. But Faulkner immediately qualifies this simple question by giving us, in V. K. Ratliff, the picture of a man who came from the same sharecropper background at the same time as Flem, and who still had an essentially rural sense of honor and decency in the commercial world. Mink, the third of these non-alikes, stayed on the land until he killed a man and was sent to prison, and as soon as he is released thirty years later, kills another. The fact that Faulkner succeeds in making the reader understand Mink is perhaps the most important achievement of the book.

UBI SUNT?

The sword *Excalibur* I find sheathed in stone
And wonder deep at sign of bygone age.

("Trust me," it says.)

But since I am alone—
And dread all myth—my fingers disengage
The blade.

No lovely lady holds me by the hand
Entreating me to slay the ogre Sin;
Olde Merlin's sign
is like a grain of sand
Upon a beach
where I have never been.

—ROBERT FLEISSNER

WITHIN TOMORROW

The living knock
With reverence
On the walls
Of my hallowed grave.
With hushed, uneasy words
They quarrel.
I huddle, intransigent,
Fingering the ledge
Of darkness
Beyond my window.
Waiting is as always,
A half-naked bulb
And the sound
Of measured breathing.

Sallow-faced day
Returns again,
Running on anxious feet
Across the bedclothes
Of a few.
With frightened, averted eyes
It prods me
In my sleep.

Dawn is a strange name
For one received
So wearily,
And with such remorse.

—JIM CONAWAY

BUREAU-CAT ON THE PROWL

(—or It's Never Too Late to Prey) . . .

Wonder what time it is. Time maybe for the neighbors to drive up across the street. No, wait; they're at home; car parked way back in the drive. That means it must be time to be on my way, in fact it's probably later than I think; sluggish after these afternoon sleeps, little nauseated too.

Clouds dark in the east and probably over the ocean now, drifting away from the mainland; streets wet, water dripping from the eaves of homes, good smell of wet, hot tar, wet grass. Must have had quite a rain, a brief but hard afternoon autumnal shower while I was asleep. But o the soft drops of rain pierce not the marble of my dark intents. My, awfully poetic this evening. Better get back in the house and dress or I'll catch death of—

What's this? Evening paper here already? Just a glance at the headlines. Hm, tornadoes fifty miles from here; must explain rain. There goes seedy old lady MacGrevor walking her dog. It really must be late. Don't have time to stand out here and read the paper at any rate. Open the door; throw paper on chair; the sitting room needs tidying up a little. Oh, to hell with it now: have more important things on my mind; I've a nightly challenge before me, a world to conquer, the fantasy world of the Perpetual Sexual before me tonight if I don't funk out. And funk is what I mean.

In the kitchen now; no matter where I seat my guests it seems they like my kitchen best. Good God, it is late; quarter to seven by the yellow clock over the stove; don't have time to fix supper now; best to catch a snack up the street. Let's see, I'll finish up there by seven thirty; it will be eight fifteen by the time I arrive at the Brooks'. Figure six or eight minutes there, and back here by a little after nine. Not bad. Won't be up late like last night. That's what's killing me, the staying up past twelve and one. But then things happened last night I didn't figure on. How exciting it all was! Makes my stomach burn at the thought. Have to watch out though. That's the sort of thing that will ruin me even if I'm not caught.

Let's see; what to wear; better look in the closet now and get ready. Damned coathangers all over the place. Gray pants; that's good, you can't see gray very well in the dark. A shirt; well, that yellow will never do; white, blue; there's a tan—not good enough; better look in the drawer. There; what? Another blue, white; ah, here it is gray shirt, gray pants; they can't spot that as easily. Now to dress. Wonder if I need some deodorant; funny how you never used to worry about that until those god-damned advertisements; underarms safe; put on the shirt; haven't worn this one in a long time; doesn't fit too badly either; pants; oh hell, if I don't tuck my shirt in I won't need a belt; who will I see anyway? Shoes, socks; what's the rush? Plenty of time; if I get there too soon it won't be dark enough. Getting a little jittery already; can almost feel with my hands that tickling irritation, that tactile sensation . . .

Hold on; I have to stop thinking of it or when the time comes I'll tremble and sweat so I'll never be able to carry it out to plan—stop thinking, stop! One, two, buckle my shoe; three, four, knock on the door; five, six—six, sixty nine, that's my line. Like hell. Go to bath; need cold water on face; stopper out; knob; that's it; not too much or it'll run over; good; feels good, almost relaxed already; towel; there now. Better run the comb through this mess; don't need a shave; teeth brushed after lunch. I'm piddling about now. Might as well go.

Where's the car keys? Right here on the dresser, stupid; wallet; pocketknife; watch; need glasses for driving; I'm ready now; back door locked; side door; best check. They're all right; lock front door.

Yes, that was a nice rain to cool things off; can't understand those tornadoes during this season.

What time does the watch say now? Five to seven; not bad; ready in ten minutes. Little breeze springing up; feels good and cool. Breathe deep of that air; fine air, crisp, evening air after torrid day; and the grass and tar always smell good after such a rain; reminds me of home and ages hence, when my will was the wind's will, and my youthful thoughts were long, long thoughts. Not much will have I now, and although my thoughts are long they creep a slimy path down the deep furrow of sensuality. How they creep now! How vivid fantasies become after long practise! But wait; what if the Brooks decide not to leave today? What if they're home now? What if George is settling down to his evening paper?

Whew! Hot in car; roll down windows to let it cool off; heat all boxed up in here; let off emergency brake; is that the right key? Sure, that's it; start motor, better give it more gas; I'll be damned if this new car is much better than the old one; there we are; lot of power on takeoffs though.

Now stop that kind of thinking; of course the Brooks left today. George said yesterday that he got the tickets for himself and the wife and two boys. They made plans and everything; they don't travel so frequently that they'd make plans and then break them. That's all George has been talking about lately; good to get away, must get the Little Lady away from it all for a couple of weeks. "Let the kids go visit granny while we have our sort of second honeymoon." Of course they're gone. My best wishes with them. May their sweet bed be blessed with the holy oil of fecundity.

What in the hell's keeping this light? Come on; beep the horn; let's get going. So many intent people. Wonder if they all know where they're heading. I imagine so. Suppose they know where I'm going, too. Suppose that square-jawed fellow behind me can, by the limitless powers of the mind, strip my consciousness naked and know what I'm thinking, where I'm going. "God-damned sex fiend," he'd curse. Or more likely, "Police, arrest that man! The man in that car!"

Can almost feel the rushing crowds watching, the square-jawed man reading my mind, can almost feel his hatred cut to my stomach, clutch my very entrails. Frantic rushing blurs from

left, to right, before, to left again. Better get out of this confusion before it suffocates me. Cars; people; lights; traffic—let's go!

Grind away, pistons, you can go faster than that. See! You've left him. He's a block behind and he's never been thinking those nasty things anyway; now he's probably mumbling, "Look at that damn speeding fool." That was a close call.

How I fear passing out in the middle of all that. These spells are becoming frequent. Just paranoid, I guess. Better stay away from crowds and traffic jams.

Hm, not far now; the restaurant is just about three more blocks. Hardware, five and dime, grocery. This section is building up. Ah, there it is, Breeze-In Eats; left blinker; signal; okay to turn in, breeze in like they say; switch off the key; out of car.

Wait a minute. Something's wrong. Where're the lights? The people? The waitresses with their tight black slacks? No other cars parked around here. Of course! I should have remembered that they're closed Wednesday. Don't tell me this is to be a night that everything goes wrong. Such ill fortune is long due me.

What to do now? Dusk is icummen in; only a short while before dark. Might as well be on my way and forget about eating. No other decent place to eat around here anyway. Hell, I'm too nervous to eat. Why am I letting myself get so flustered? Simply leave car here in drive and walk the rest of the way; don't want the car seen anywhere around me if there's trouble.

But why anticipate trouble? Actually this is a very easy thing; there's no doubt of that. Across gravel drive now to curb. Cross street here; cars rambling past, people standing on corner waiting for bus; a lot of stores around here; shopping centers spring up all around this town. What? That old beggar still shaking his cup? I can walk right by without—no, he already hears me; there goes that cup again.

—Help the blind, sir. Please help the bliiind.

What a gruesome face; poor fellow doesn't even have teeth. Let's see if I have some change; nickle, couple of dimes, quarter.

—There you are.

Coins clink dead in bottom of tin cup; toothless smile; ough! What a face!

—God bless you, sir. God bless you for helping the blind. Poor fellow; but what a nuisance; pass on, get away from such an ugly sight. Pedestrians wait. All right, have your way, light. Cars darting by faster and faster, longer and longer; so many people in them, so many white bitter faces driving past.

Attractive young couple standing there, probably on their way to a movie. That's it, get that hand around her waist, you'll have her before the night's over; good for the morale. Wonder what they would do if they knew that a sex fiend is waiting beside them for the same green light to cross the street. The young man would draw the girl up beside him and threaten me with his fist, but his eyes would betray him by their fear, or maybe they would just run away. Running away is much simpler, much more indicative of our—

Oops, walk pedestrians. All right; walk away from the couple, let them drag along undisturbed. They don't even know I'm on the same street, in the same world with them. But am I in the same world? Goodnight, young lovers.

More buildings; stores; people sauntering to the local bar or movie; late workers on their way home to wife, supper, the kids and television; young street prowlers of the night leaning against buildings or poles, a stacked woman accompanied by a sailor into a bar; neon advertisement lights; city lights shining dully since beginning of dusk.

Boy selling papers; young blue-veined throat straining:

—Fifteen feared dead from tornadoes!

Must be late edition; good thing those tornadoes didn't hit here. Well, I couldn't care less as long as they don't interrupt my little ventures. Of course I shouldn't think that way because I'm basically altruistic. People are grand.

Here's a familiar store I always like to pass. Same display in the showcase; looks as though they would change it more often than they do. It's a good one, though. Six mannequins adorned with cashmere sweaters and furs; fox furs, chinchilla. Hm, must be the coming fall styles; all pretty expensive. Ah, here are some nightgowns; silk, light blue and pink. This showcase is more to my liking. Corsets zippered about well-proportioned torsos, nightgown silks for milady's slumber hanging limply in folds of blue and pink, sky, sky blue and probably the texture of—of complete womanliness; lovely lady dressed in blue; and

the pink, best of all the pink, color of flesh, of heaving, soft, sensual skin, silken, pink skin, salacious sensual silken pinks; sinking sensually 'pon sentient silkeness fingering fleshy flaxen fibers of the pure, palatable pinks. . . .

. . . and thus she walks in beauty. But hold on; am I going to stand here all night? Tonight there's more than mere visual sensations. Such simple pleasures for simple people . . . move on; get out of all these lights and cars. National Bank Time 7:50. Save Money, Save Time. Time, time . . . lose track of time when I get carried away like this. Boot, saddle to horse and away!

Down the now nighttime avenues again to my destination; almost out of shopping center, the bars and stores are thinning; curb, no cars; vacant lot, another block, crickets grinding; Elm Street; Oak Street; Maple Street; Pine Street; letters painstakingly engraved in stone so people will know where they live. Never can tell when one will lose one's way.

Streets dark now except for the tall, looming lights strategically placed on every corner. Thank God the Brooks live in the middle of the block and they own the lot adjoining their inviting window.

Everywhere now the chirr of insects. Makes more sense than a lot of people's babble . . . boy riding past on motorcycle, whirling his noisy way into the night; my metabolism commencing its long, steady climb in its ritualistic trek to the inevitable orgasm. Wasted time standing before that window like some robot. Another block my body now settling into a rather rapid gait; long, swift steps almost spanning the cracks of the sidewalk. Some trees rustle again in the pleasant breeze, perhaps sent by the gods to cool the passions of men. The residential houses becoming more frequent, the din of the shopping center diminishing with the blocks behind me.

Everything is according to plan. I feel again and again the knife in my pocket; my sides begin to hurt from the exertion of rapid walking; sweat wets my shirt, almost fogs my glasses. The cleanswept night streets; the breeze; I half-walk, half-leap over the rain puddles in the gutter which reflect the street lights. How dark it would be if there were no street lights! What fearful crimes would be rampant! What creatures would prowl the darkness! The continuous rustle of trees, the faint sound of traffic in the distance, the flitting cement beneath my steps, grey

puffs of clouds in the blackness overhead, the chirr of insects and the redolent aroma of a gardenia or jasmine hiding in some dark yard, betrayed by its savor. I sense all these separately and wholly as I function with the night.

How different it is to walk down the streets nowadays! No longer does one see the brightly lighted houses replete with noises of people talking, music, card games; no longer does one perceive the red glow of cigarettes from the dark yards where couples sit smoking in the Lethean obscurity, perhaps talking quietly and looking at the stars. Two, three, four, five houses in a row dark save for the bright white glare of the television screen in the living room and quiet except for the tin dramatic voices of third rate actors shouting their blatant, trite lines. What dead souls! What an age of spectators! Well then, let the spectators watch as I enact a drama much more tense and startling because it is real, real to *me*. I, not the actors, feel my throat tighten, my heart quicken and beat fiercely against my chest, feel fear sit upon my shoulders and weigh me down, feel the dryness of my mouth and lips, the wet clamminess of my hands; it is I who exert the frantic effort to still those hands, trembling in mounting expectation of the moment of truth.

How do bullfighters ever endure that occupational ordeal? El momento de verdad. Soon, soon! Corner; curb; step gently now, not too noisily; two more blocks to the Brooks.

O what vast seas of sensuality await me! Shortly, shortly; patience now. Blind with desire already. Careful, careful . . . there's the Pleiades, Orion, Andromeda; a slice of moon to afford sufficient light. Grace Brooks, may you revel and carouse in Brookland while I pursue my humble passion.

Bow wow wow wow! Shutup you mangy mongrel; filthy little cur. I'm not interested in your block, I'm no trespasser of your domain now. How I loathe dogs! Steps, steps, how lonely you sound on vacant sidewalks; sprinkler revolving somewhere in the dark of that yard; someone not satisfied with this afternoon's shower; across the street now, this is the block; quietly, act as though you are taking your nocturnal stroll, a poetic soul in contrast to the commonplace husband who amuses himself in a bar or before the television. Poetic, yes! All sacrificed for a passion, the most powerful of all the dramatic situations. All sacrificed for an unbridled paroxysm of neurons, of axons rush-

ing joyfully to the medulla oblongata, to the testes, the glands of Cowper, bulbo-urethral glands—all such enchanting names, almost romantic. Well, why not? O joy joy joy so soon to be mine in satiated lust!

I can make out the house now, ideally located at the top of a small hill, a sedate little white house, plain and bourgeois. How innocent it seems! One can sense that such a potent passion has never been felt beneath its roof. I approach it quietly now, one by one I discern its features; the low windows, dark and ominous, the small porch, the hedge bordering its yard. Cautiously now; three or four more steps and then stop; best stop to survey the surroundings.

If only poor (God rest her soul) Mother could but see me now, standing before the dark windows of the Brooks, sweating, feeling with trembling hands the knife in my pocket, delighting in this overwhelming exhilaration. Who could fathom such a passion? Let others wallow in their diluted lust, let them shout and boast and beat their flabby chests in scorn of aphrodisiacs. I know the hearts in those chests could never survive a passion like this.

But can *my* heart take it? Quiet, quiet your pounding or the neighbor'll hear you above their televisions. The dark, closed window before me; the sinister obscurity of the vacant lot to my right. Yes, the time is ripe. People across the street aren't home; people at the corners can't see nor hear me above the violent gunfire just released by the Marshal of Dodge City. O peaceful families, dwell in your tranquil harmony and enjoy our great democracy of liberty and justice!

Great god Eros, bless my work!

Across the grass now; no need to tiptoe; automatic reflexes from childhood. Up to the window. Drip, drip; water still coming from eaves. Now let's see; glance again over my shoulder. What an easy window this is! Some night bird tweeting away; knife open in my hand, now; careful. Oh, this is too simple! Can't see very well, though; pull screen out a little; the sound of a screw and hook lock being strained. What a joke of a lock; a burglar must have invented it; small cut with the knife above hook one; there, a dull scratching sound; no one can hear that above gun shots; slip the blade under the screen; careful; flick the lock with the blade; there, good. Now the same with the

other lock; cut, slip blade in, flip lock; there, the screen is opened. How very simple, and yet how thrilling! But I must work quickly. What if the garage owner decides to take a stroll down the block to get away from his wife? I would have to run to beat hell around the block like last night, in a crazy zig-zag retreat to the car, taking time to hide in clump of trees or sitting demurely on bus stops. No, officer, I haven't seen anyone run past, I say, my treasure pressing against my breast. What a great farce!

Now the window. This is the dangerous part. It *would* be locked from the inside. But one of these locks never stops anyone who's intent. Be quiet, heart; still, hands; let's see; the lock is in the middle there where the two panes meet; take handkerchief from back pocket; I wedge my body under screen. Dear God, if someone comes by now I'm caught for good—but if someone tries to stop me now I will kill. So easy just slash this blade across the throat; very easy. Work fast and don't worry. Double handkerchief; place it against the pane next to lock; now the knife handle; easy, you've done this before and know it must be done easily; tap gently at first; yes, one, two, judge how hard a tap it would take to break. Is the Marshal of Dodge City firing his six shooters? Now! Strike hard; the tinkle of glass as pieces from the small shattered section fall inside on the wooden bedroom floor; quickly slip fingers in small hole; feel the wooden frame where the two panes meet; there it is; the cold iron of the lock; clasp it, fingers; there, push it to the left; it's open; up, window, quietly; glance to right, to left; all is peaceful; the Marshal rides to the fort for reinforcements; boost up on window ledge, swing legs over, watch head. Ah, banish, plump Jack, into the blissful bedroom of the Brooks!

Dark. Watch for chair by window; here's a double bed. Heart, you are mad! If only these hands would still. I don't dare make a light. Wait; can just barely begin making out this room; thank you, slice of moon; pierce these shadows, carrot eyes! A chair; bed; fan by window; bedside tables; lamps; closet . . . Ah, that dark, oblong piece of furniture across the room must be it. Wait; Yes, it's the dresser all right. O what a veritable treasure house! Indeed a dream out of the—

Sharp, loud ringing from out the dark. Aie! Jangle of nerves; I stand pertified in cold sweat. Only the telephone right

beside me on the bedside table. Again, again it sounds. What a fright that first ring gave me. Who could it be? This can't keep up or I'll shatter, funk out, tear my hair. Be brave, *brazen*. Can I trust my voice? The plastic receiver slips into my wet hands.

—Hello.

—Hello, George. Is Gracie there?

An elderly woman's voice. Old bitch; probably calling for the PTA.

—You must have dialed the wrong number.

I hang up. Damn her to everlasting perdition! Wait; that's it, take the receiver off the hook before she phones again. There; sound, sound busy signal, while I commence my busy job.

With two steps I'm at the dresser, my eyes now acute, nerves tense and ready; top drawer; feel about; lot of noise; bottles, lipstick; ba, these are the cosmetics. Next drawer. Hell, George's shirts; my hands are wetting everything. Third drawer . . . Yes! O heaven! Yes! O palpitating heart! Feel that divine silkiness, stroke the subtle fibers, stretch the flexible band, smell the fresh laundered smell; the tickling irritation radiating through the finger tips; kiss this handful of rapture, bury the face in naughty voluptuousness; crush it next to the heart! Yes, O yes! One, two, three pairs of the pinkest panties, freshly laundered to gird the loins of a misty Venus! Have to work quickly, lest it all escapes, vanishes! What else is there? A bra. O elastic monster of gross sensuality! O gorgeous slip. Yes, take that too; what's this other stuff? Wait; two more panties. But the rest; no worry; there's only junk left in here; bathrobe, slippers. Reckon that's about the best of it. O silken heaven! Better get out of here fast or else I'll be caught and cast from this lustful paradise. Flee now to some private cove where I can enjoy my spoils without fear; in my own dear time and in my own way; tear them, crush them, devour them if I like.

To get out; thrust the garments under shirt; better wait to count them; how heavy my head feels! Over to window; peer out; no one in sight; swing legs out on ledge; ease down, feel the ground beneath feet. Goodbye, sweet room! I leave you as you are, ravaged by the great god Eros!

Down side of house to pavement. If anyone sees me now! No one in sight. All right now to walk quietly (as though I

could walk quietly with my treasure beneath my shirt!). The Marshal is telling the captain that the calvary needn't come, that everything is under control.

The walk to my car will now be as brief as the golden bridge to an empyrean. How I float upon this sweet nimbus, pressing my treasure against my pounding breast! O Grace Brooks! May you enjoy your blissful life with capable Mr. Brooks, while I, humble creature that I am, glow in admiring and possessing the noble shell of femininity!

Bow wow wow yourself, you shaggy dog dog! You can't disturb this happy man.



Poe iz [sic sic sic]

LETTER TO KAZUKO
c/o BAR DESIRE

For the first star
And the final mating
Enclosed find thirty dollars,
Ten thousand and eight hundred yen.
Buy the summer kimono,
The two black sashes
That match the nightbirds,
The bordering caprice. . . .
When you tie the first sash
That deepens the melon swing,
Remember me;
With the second sash
That girders the fountain,
The overflow, the downward symmetry
Remember me. . . .

Kazuko, I am back in the city.
This is a different country.
I rise in the night
And notice the sea. . . .
The great limbs aching
In the wind. . . .
I am lonely; no one touches me.
The buds of the cherry trees
Are broken now; petal snow
In my window light
Trenches the gutters. . . .
How is the hill?

The travelers there,
The crowfeather hair,
Is it still cut straight
Across their foreheads?
And are they solemn in
Their wooden geta,
The school books
And umbrellas?
I have no doubt.
The japonicas we planted
On the fringes of the courtyard
Have they budded?
I question too much. . . .

It is late, too late;
A roommate mumbles toward
My light, turning. . . .
Blossoms, petal swirling. . . .

Chodai, I ask you,
Send me love.
Chodai, I ask you,
Send me love.

—RALPH DENNIS

A POEM AS A PERSONAL TOY

say, for example, a prescription

Honking horses run down the center of the street.
Trucked hogs squeal like little girls in Des Moines
Patted behind by *old men disguised as old men.*

A friend rides for Colorado—a car
His '57 Chevy breathes somewhat as Sacco used to.
My friend disguised as my friend steers slowly
Looking out his rear view for another Big Bill.

In Carolina, in lotus position, Baker
Holds a curious interest in his wrist.
No more than a poet disguised as a poet
Considers homosexuality, the heart
Of a child & wildly whistles discursiveness.

Dear Dolores probing with a knitting needle
Drops her pills under the tub, lifts
Carries it through all the rooms. Children
Dance! pull at the skirts on the Arch d'Triomphe.
Eve disguised as Eve by surprise.

The slatted hog truck I drive like a snake
Tracking a load. The horses off the road laugh
With their necks. Let the little girls call the police!
As my friends are disguised as my friends
My enemies are disguised as my enemies.
A plot is obvious.

—DENNIS PARKS

SALINGER'S SEYMOUR

J. D. Salinger's latest work, "Seymour: An Introduction," which appeared in *The New Yorker*, June 6, 1959, presents problems for both reader and author, and calls for a critical response to what appears to be a change in the direction (some would say quality) of his literary work. Although there has been little published response to this intricate preface, certainly those who follow the literary progress of Salinger's soul are disturbed by what seems a violent departure in style and form. The immediate problem in this narrative essay on Seymour is directly related to the distinction between reality and illusion, and whether or not the reader is able to accept the same ground rules as the author. This problem becomes the center of the reaction to the work because Salinger has given his fictional author Buddy Glass so little distance from his own hand and mind that the literary illusion is difficult to sustain and thus, the whole purpose of the subject is threatened before it can be fulfilled.

Although the change in style and form in this recent work seems abrupt, it is really one of four "stories" written since 1955 dealing specifically with the Glass family. "Franny," in *The New Yorker*, January 29, 1955, presented Seymour's twenty-year-old sister in a crisis provoked by her mystic experiment during an ivy league football date. There was no interference by the author, but the ghost of Seymour and influence of Buddy were present in Franny's attitude toward ego, beauty, poetry, and knowledge of God. Her frustration over collegiate sophistry is convincingly ironic because her weekend date represents everything she loathes, and her mystic withdrawal from reality concludes the story.

Seymour does not appear at all in "Raise High the Roof Beams, Carpenters," from *The New Yorker*, November 19, 1955, which is Buddy's account of his brother's wedding day in 1942. Here the narrator spends the afternoon with members of the bridal party trying to get to the bride's house after Seymour has failed to appear for the wedding. The anguish and irony in the contrast between the aspersions hurled against Seymour in Buddy's presence, and the contradiction to those attacks in Buddy's quoted excerpts from Seymour's diary, seem even more oppressive here than in "Franny." Buddy's presence as narrator in this story is strongly felt and the reader is aware of the close emotional and intellectual ties between the two brothers.

The proprieties of place and time are largely subordinated to the essayist Buddy in "Zooney" which appeared in *The New Yorker*, May 4, 1957. Here Buddy develops the character of his brother Zooney as he confronts Franny's emotional collapse. Zooney curses the ghost of Seymour, considers himself and Franny freakish products of Seymour's influence and consequently holds his older brother responsible for Franny's condition. In all these stories, Seymour seems to have a kind of fictional hovering stress and seems most closely related to Buddy. The circumstance reflects similar but differently resolved situations with Thomas Wolfe and Henry James, in whose work a fraternal spirit also makes itself felt. Yet for all Seymour's unusual presence in these three stories, he really seems to have little kinship with the Seymour Glass who killed himself in "A Nice Day for Bananafish," written in 1948 shortly after this death is said to have occurred. This earlier story seems in perspective a kind of stark two-part dialogue where Seymour speaks and dies, leaving an image terse, brief, and laconic.

The closer the author approaches Seymour through Buddy, the more diffuse, discursive, and unexpected the writing becomes. The reader notices that the author consistently finds obstacles which prevent him from getting to the point. Buddy struggles to get beyond Seymour's notebook filled with a kind of "double-haiku" poetry by developing his feelings about them, his apprehension about the critical reception they might receive, his convictions about their literary merit, and the implication they hold for him in developing his brother's character. He elaborates on Seymour's place in the family, discusses long quoted extracts from Seymour's letters and memos, while making little conscious

effort to subordinate his interference with the image of the character he is attempting to erect. He attempts a description of Seymour's features, his hair, eyes, ears; his habits of dress, his attitude toward sports, learning, children—in all, a "heinzlike" variety of traits, details, and reminiscences scattered through what Buddy recalls of his brother's thirty-one years. If the reader can endure the sense of confusion, the impression is one of simultaneity, if not of spontaneity. And though the reader is likely to be lost, wandering through these columns of prose, he is not likely to be bored, but rather fascinated by the plethora of allusion and reminiscence.

Because Salinger has not limited Buddy's place in the development of Seymour, the introduction suggests that whatever accumulates as a kind of memorial to Seymour actually will become only Buddy's dramatic narration of his feelings about his deceased mentor. Deprived of the illusion of knowing Seymour as a fictional character, and restrained from accepting him as an actual brother, the reader ultimately gets neither illusion nor reality, neither fiction nor biography. Faced with this dilemma, the reader may hardly greet Salinger's justification of form and style with anything but ambivalence. He may question the precedent of discarding literary proprieties because Seymour's character and eminence prohibits any literary synthesis. He may even rebel at accepting the character-essay at the expense of artifice. But he must concede that Salinger arms himself with authorities whose position as preface gives the essay even another fascination.

The difficulty of the task Buddy assumes is increased with his reference to Kafka's belief that love prevents ability from realizing character, and Kierkegaard's observation that an error made in character is persistently indelible. Buddy's attention to these observations helps account here for the quality of the introduction. He cannot afford an error in either general or detailed characterization, and at the same time, he is hindered in his effort by his closeness to the subject. The references made aside about sudden fits of sweating, the discursiveness, the helpless groping, reflect an involvement which grows out of this relationship. The proximity between narrator and subject is aesthetic and emotional in origin and development, and the hazards involved in the literary creation of Seymour are increased because

the brothers spring from the same aesthetic-emotional matrix. So much of what they were, said, or did is common to both of them that Buddy and Seymour lose individual identities for an original single identification. Thus, when Buddy works to separate himself from this matrix, he is unable to subordinate himself because he shares a common psyche with Seymour. In another sense, Buddy's difficulty grows out of greater knowledge and intuition than he can manage in fiction, and in addition, his "knowing" is intensified by a love which cannot readily permit accuracy and detachment.

Though it will be some time before the character of Seymour can be judged, the reader must consider to what extent Salinger's work has been successful. Although he has given himself premise enough for anything short of tape-recorded reverie, the reader must wonder in apprehension how magnificent a human being Seymour can be, that he becomes a spiritual Gulliver in quite versatile literary forms. Such a consideration again puts the reader in the dilemma between reality and illusion, and he must continue to wonder if Salinger has forgotten that the path from experience to literary expression involves more than memory and translation.



THE BRIGHT CHILD DIED

Carts of funeral flowers
For the dead bird we towed.
Roses and lily towers
For the dead bird we towed

To the straight black crest
Of the hill in the high town,
To the sacramental bird rest,
On the hill in the high town.

In a brocaded box,
We carried the corpse,
In our day dirtied socks
We carried the corpse

Intoning the dead bird
I remember I've heard
I remember I've heard
Child chants of interment.

I remember I've heard.
The child priest was nine
And I buried the bird.
The child priest was nine.

I, skinny, five years
Old, the grave digger.
Wild with old fear,
Old, the grave digger.

Wild with old fear,
The bright child died.
With no mourning tear,
The bright child died.

—PARKER HODGES

DAY AFTER TOMORROW

It was during summer school, after I had graduated that I got to know Harry Meggs. I had met him a little earlier, because he came to the house several days before graduation. I was very busy then, getting ready to graduate, so I didn't have time or take time to talk to him. Apparently, neither did anyone else. He came in quietly, settled himself in an already vacated room and watched the confusion. School was over, and the only boys left were waiting for graduation. We were pretty accustomed to seeing old alumni drop into the house from time to time. They usually came in droves on the big dance weekends. Some young, some even middle-aged, all trying to get a glimpse of something they had lost sight of after college. If anyone had stopped to think about it, they might have thought it a little strange that anyone would want to visit just before graduation. But no one ever did, so Harry went unquestioned.

The first thing I remembered about Harry, even before I met him, was his suitcase. It was a new, brown, expensive-looking suitcase with the initials H.A.M. stamped on it in gold letters. At the time I thought it was mildly funny. Later I thought it was just pitiful.

The first time I met Harry, I was hurrying to the cleaners with my graduation robe. My room was at the end of the hall, and I had to pass the one he had camped in on the way out. I was just beyond his room when he spoke. All he said was "Hello!" His voice was deep, without resonance, and for some reason sounded a little artificial. Later I figured out that he was pushing his voice back in his throat, trying to make it deeper, and that was what gave it the artificial sound.

I backed up and stuck my head in his room. He was sprawled comfortably on a straight-backed chair. From his skin and his hairline he looked to be around thirty. But the rest of him looked ten years younger. His hair was crewcut and very black,

and he was comfortably overweight without being fat. He was smoking a cigarette, holding it between his thumb and forefinger and constantly tapping it with his middle finger as though it were a cigar. This irritated me, and I began to mildly dislike Harry from the first. He stood up and stuck out his hand. "I'm Harry Meggs. Harry Alexander Meggs. Some people call me 'Ham'." He laughed. "I was a Gamma here. Graduated in fifty-two." He laughed again. "Seven long years ago." He drew out the "long", and this irritated me also.

"Pete Stevens. Glad to meet you."

He finally stopped shaking hands with me. "Who could I see about renting a room for the summer? You see, I'm thinking about entering law school—"

"You can see me. I'm the house manager for the summer. Make yourself comfortable, and we'll talk about it later. I've got to get this robe to the cleaners now."

"What! Why, they're shafting you boys. What's happening to this place? When I was here nobody ever got a gown that wasn't already cleaned and pressed!" He waved his stub of a cigarette through the air like it was a foot long.

"Yes, things are getting bad all over. I'll see you later." I left, glad to get away. I hadn't cared to tell him that the robe was in perfect shape when I got it, and that several of us had gotten very drunk the night before and had our own graduation rehearsal in the back yard. I knew he would have slapped me on the back and laughed his damn throaty condescending laugh and said that "the boys" hadn't changed so much since his time after all.

My parents came up for graduation—all of it. Mother bustled as usual, and Dad looked a little bewildered which was not at all usual. I was glad to see them. We live five hundred miles from school, and I hadn't been home since Christmas. Yet their coming had its disadvantages. I had to go to the Baccalaureate sermon with them for one thing. And for another, they added to the confusion. But I was still glad to see them. The afternoon of the day they arrived we sat on the back porch of the almost deserted fraternity house and drank gin and tonics. It was very hot and the tonics were dry and cooling and tasted so good that I drank too many of them and got tipsy and tried not to act that

way for my parents. Mother asked me if I felt different now that I was a college graduate, and I told her no. Then Dad talked about summer school and my plans for the future. It made me a little uncomfortable to talk about it, because in going to summer school I was admitting that I had made a mistake earlier.

When I first came to college, Dad and I had planned for me to go into the business school. By the end of my Freshman year I had discovered how hard the accounting course was and how many people had flunked it and had consequently flunked out of business school. By the middle of my Sophomore year I had come to the conclusion that the business school was for people who couldn't get along in the world on their own initiative. So at the end of my Sophomore year I registered for the school of English and for the next two years got a very liberal education.

Toward the end of my senior year I began to get scared. It was largely just a fear of having to strike out on my own, but it took the form of wondering just what kind of job I could get with a solid background in English literature. After much emotional fumbling and a little thinking, I decided to go to summer school and take all the business courses I could cram in. This, I felt, should give me some good preparation. And it would very conveniently postpone severing the long-attached cord for at least three more months.

Graduation was a nuisance. There was a lot of standing, a lot of sitting and a lot of ignoring of speakers. I kept telling myself that it would mean a lot to me later and so managed to get through.

My parents left the day after graduation, and since summer school was only two days off, I didn't have time to go home. The house was empty except for Harry, myself, and Gene Birch, who, like myself, lived too far away from school to go home. Gene had a girl friend who was also staying for summer school, so I didn't see much of him. There was no one left for me to associate with but Harry.

We started eating out together, Harry and I, not because I particularly liked the idea of eating with Harry Meggs, but because the campus was practically deserted, and eating with Harry was better than eating alone.

Walking downtown with him was even worse than listening to him talk at mealtime. I think Harry was absolutely the slowest walking man I'd ever seen. Sometimes I wondered how he

kept going. But he always managed to get one foot in front of the other, keeping his shoulders hunched over and his head dangling on the end of his neck.

The first time we went out, he talked to me about rooming at the fraternity house. "Like I started to tell you the other day, I'm thinking about going to law school." He settled himself down into the diner booth, stationed his elbows on the table and looked across his folded hands at me. "You see, Pete, I'm in insurance. I've been in the business for, oh, six or seven years now. And I guess I've made some pretty good money in my time." He smiled at me with all of his face but his mouth, which was turned down at the corners. It was the silent expression of his condescending laugh. He went on. "In the last three years I've averaged five hundred dollars a month," he paused, "on commissions!" He paused again to let the "commissions" sink in. "But I've been thinking about it. It's hard work. Awfully hard work. If I kept this up much longer I'd have a good case of ulcers. Besides, I'm not the type of man to be satisfied with six thousand a year. There are things I want out of this life that can't be had on that kind of money.

"Well, I've just about decided that law school would be the best thing for me. With my business experience and a law degree, I could go into either law or business and make a killing. A real killing. And then there's a certain amount of prestige attached to a professional man."

"So you're going to start back to school this summer?"

"Not on your life! Not at this school. Harvard, Pete, Harvard. The best in the country. So you ask why I'm here now. I'll tell you. Living high is a weakness of mine. I was renting a house back home that ran one fifty per month, eating all my meals out, and spending one hell of a lot of money on fine liquor and beautiful women." He winked at me and I ignored him. "Now, I'm going to need money for school, and I figured I could live cheaper here than just about anywhere else. And, believe me, boy, there's a lot of insurance to be sold in this territory. And one other thing, I may pick up a law course or two while I'm here. Just to get started, you know. I'm a little rusty on this school business.

"Well, now, can you give me a room?"

"For fifteen a month."

"Fine, fine. Oh, and do you think I could have a single? I'll be using it as an office, sort of, and have stuff spread out all over the place. It would probably get in anyone else's way and—you know."

"I know. Just keep the one you're in. You can have it to yourself."

By this time I had finished eating, so I pretended to be in a hurry and left him with half his meal to go.

That night I couldn't go to sleep for a while so I thought about Harry. I decided that I didn't really dislike him after all. He was too simple for that. I just thought he was a little contemptible. But in spite of that I couldn't help admiring him for what he was doing. To give up everything at thirty and start all over again took a certain amount of courage. I seriously doubted I could have done it.

It wasn't long before I got fed up with Harry. I got to the point where I was even willing to eat alone to avoid him. But the choice was no longer mine. Harry would always find me just before mealtime and ask me to join him. And when we ate, he always managed to dominate the conversation. I didn't particularly care to talk to him, so I let him talk without saying much myself. His conversation was remarkably monotonous. He talked about money. At first I felt that I should make an effort to be interested. Since I was going to be sitting through business courses for the summer, I knew I'd have to get used to it sooner or later. But Harry was so damned obnoxious about it.

One thing he loved to talk about was the financial statistics on ex-Gammas. "Do you realize that the average income of the man who graduated from this chapter is twenty thousand a year? Now that doesn't mean that being a Gamma will make you successful. But it does seem to indicate that the Gammas only take potentially successful men. At least that's the way I look at it."

Or he would get out a pencil, begin scratching figures on a napkin and tell me how he could accumulate five hundred thousand in the next ten years.

"All I need is ten thousand to start with. You've got to have capital, boy. Capital. That's the key word in the business world.

"Now you take my graduating class. I could sit down right

now and have you no less than five boys, five of them, in that class, who made good because of capital. And I can tell you, I think without bragging, that none of them had any more brains or a better business head than I do. Now I'm not saying this to build myself up. I'm just trying to let you see how important capital is."

"I see."

He smiled at me with his mouth turned down, and for a moment he looked almost sad. "But those fellows had rich fathers who were willing to set them up. My Dad could have done it, but he didn't. He wanted to see me make it on my own. From scratch. Now I'm glad he did, you know. I've had to work hard, but I've done well for myself. And if I go back into insurance after law school, I'll make a real killing."

He never did say what he would have done with all that capital he didn't have.

For the next few days I managed to avoid Harry. School started, and I was busy going to class, buying books, and getting used to summer school. I wanted to get off to a good start, so I kept myself on the go right at first.

One night just after classes had begun, I sat down and made out an elaborate set of books so I could keep my house-managing duties straight. As it turned out, this was a farce. I lost the books three days later and never did bother to make up new ones. I decided that, after all, I was intelligent enough to keep that little bit of math in my head. But I did start out with good intentions.

Business school was barely tolerable, but there were compensations. It was good to see new faces, especially new female faces. There weren't many girls in business classes, but those on campus were easy to meet. And most of them were there for a good time. Summer school was a wonderful combination of education and vacation.

It wasn't long before I was drinking beer in the afternoons and dating almost every night. I am sure that the Gamma house witnessed some of the best parties of its career that summer.

Harry would usually come to the parties. But he would just stand and look. He never had a date and he never drank. Usually he would go to bed early. I felt a little sorry for him in spite of

myself. He was an obnoxious character, there was no doubt about that. But he couldn't be too happy at this point. The life he was leading was almost debasing, living in a small, single room, having to save every penny he could, and having no one his own age to associate with. For a while I wondered why he hadn't married and settled down. But then I decided he probably couldn't find anyone who would have him.

After I got settled down into the routine of summer school, I began to notice something about Harry that hadn't struck me before. He rarely left his room unless it was for meals. His door was usually closed and his radio going. I don't think he ever missed a baseball game. I suppose I had noticed it all along, but I hadn't thought about it. Now I began to wonder when the hell he was selling insurance in this red-hot territory. After I had thought about it, I began to look for him every time I passed his door. He was always there. Once when the radio wasn't going, I pushed the door open. He was lying on the bed naked. As soon as I walked in, he turned his body toward the wall and twisted his head around and grinned at me with his frown-grin,

I said "excuse me," and hurried out. After that I felt like a damn fool and wished I had asked him something or said anything in the world but, "excuse me". I knew he must have been pretty embarrassed. I had caught boys in the house before, by mistake, and they had always been embarrassed, but it wasn't nearly as bad with them because they weren't thirty years old and eight years older than I. I felt bad about it all day, and the next time I saw Harry I probably tried too hard to act as if nothing had happened.

Even before this happened, Harry had stopped trailing me to meals so often. But it seemed that after that he stopped altogether. I figured at the time that it was just because he was embarrassed and so didn't wonder about it too much. I was glad to get rid of him anyway.

Harry had a car that sat behind the Gamma house all the time. He never drove it, probably because he never went anywhere. It was a new black and cream Chevrolet with five thousand miles on it. Harry had told me that he didn't particularly like it. He said he would have bought a Jaguar, but it wouldn't do for an insurance man. An insurance man's car, he said, had to present a picture of financial respectability, but couldn't be

flashy. The prospects would think he was crooked or something.

One day toward the end of June I looked out my window and saw a big Cadillac parked in the back yard. Two older men and Harry were standing around Harry's Chevy. One of the men was throwing stuff out of the car. The other was talking to Harry. After a few minutes one of them got in Harry's car, the other got in the Cadillac and they drove off. Then Harry ambled back toward the house. Just before he got to the house, I yelled down to him. "Couldn't you keep up the payments?" I tried to make it sound like a big joke, but I was really curious.

He laughed and said, "Not at all. Not at all. I sold it. I wasn't using it much anyway. I can do most of my business here on foot. And I needed the money for school next year, you know."

Later he told me he thought he'd buy a second hand car with part of the money, but he never did.

It wasn't too long after he sold the car that the typewriter business came up. One afternoon I was sitting in my room writing my parents for money when this strange guy knocked on my open door and asked me where he could find Harry Maggs.

"His name is Harry Meggs and he lives down the hall." I went with him to show him Harry's room. When he pushed the door open we saw that Harry wasn't there. I was flabbergasted.

"Do you know anything about his typewriter?" this guy said.

"No. I didn't know he had one."

"He had a 'for sale' ad for it in the paper. Fifty dollars."

So we looked around and found the typewriter under the bed, and the guy left a check on Harry's desk.

I asked Harry about it later, and he said it was for his school fund. It seemed kind of stupid to me. I should think he'd need the typewriter more than the fifty dollars, but I didn't say anything.

Harry certainly was a strange character. I spent a lot of my free time trying to figure him out. He was still hibernating in his room. I would only see him every now and then walking down town. I could spot him every time from at least a hundred yards. Nobody else walked like that. And he always wore the same clothes, khaki pants and a white shirt rolled up to the elbows.

One night toward the end of June I dropped into Gene Birch's room for a talk. I liked Gene, but because he was so

busy studying and seeing his girl I never got a chance to have a real talk with him. I wanted to see what he thought about Harry. By this time he was a complete mystery to me. Gene was studying psychology, and he usually had one or two theories about everybody. I figured a weird guy like Harry would be just his dish. Gene was finishing up school this summer. He had the army behind him, and ahead of him, a nice woman and a very good job with some advertising company. He was a fairly nice looking guy in spite of the fact that he was tall, rather thin and had red hair. When I pushed open his door, he was leaning back in his chair with his bare, size twelve feet propped up on the desk.

"You studying?" I asked.

"I'm through now. Come on in, Pete. I was just sitting here trying to figure something out. Do you think it's better to rent a house or apartment, or go on and make a down payment on your own? That is, assuming you have a steady income."

"Are you asking me?"

"I just want an opinion. You're in business school. Your mind should be adapted to this sort of thing."

I laughed. "You've got the wrong man, my friend. The only time I think about business is when I'm in class. I'm not even a decent house manager."

He smiled at me and lit a cigarette. "All right. What do you think about?"

I lit a cigarette too. He was primed for a conversation now. "Sex and beer. And one other thing. This idiot who lives down the hall here."

"Which one?"

"Harry. Harry A. Meggs. Some people call him Ham. I can't figure that guy out. What the devil is he doing here? Do you ever see him?"

"He comes in here and talks to me just about every night."

"Has he told you anything about himself?"

"Just that he's going to law school and is selling insurance."

"But he's not selling anything as far as I can see."

"Neither is he going to law school."

"He told you that?"

"No. That's my own idea." Gene puffed on his cigarette and thought for a moment. "Now this is just my theory, of

course, but look at it this way. If you were getting ready to go to school for two or three years, would you quit working three months before school started?"

"Not unless I was rich."

"Exactly. And Harry is not rich. He says he can live more cheaply here. I guess he's told you the same story. That part of it is true. But he sure'y can't put away any money if he's not working. No matter how cheaply he's living. I think Harry was fired. Or he was doing such a poor job of selling insurance, assuming that he really was doing that, that he just quit."

"But why would he come here?"

"Where could he go?"

"I'd go home. At least until I got another job."

"If you were thirty years old? That would be even more embarrassing than coming here. Can you imagine going home to Daddy after all this time? He would be admitting complete defeat then. Besides, his parents wouldn't believe the stories he's been telling us. And whether we believe them or not, he must think we do."

"It makes sense. I wonder what he's going to do?"

"I doubt that he knows any more than we do. The first thing he has to do is face reality. I wouldn't be at all surprised if he believes a lot of these lies that he's been telling us. He probably thinks that he really is going to law school. Harry is one of these people who can't face his own limitations. When he graduated here seven years ago he must have thought of himself as a financial genius. The world owed him a living. Then he got out into the world and everything didn't follow according to his little plan. To some extent this happens to almost everyone. And most people adjust their aspirations to their capabilities. But apparently, Harry hasn't been able to do that. He still thinks he's a genius. And because the world around him won't admit it, he lives in a world of his own making. He talks about law school and amassing fortunes when he hasn't got enough money to eat on. Do you know, he had to borrow some money from me to eat on? Two days ago I saw him in the drugstore drinking a nickel coke. I'm sure that was his lunch. That night he came in and asked if he could borrow ten dollars. He said he'd pay it back when the money from his car came in. But I know that's ten dollars down the drain."

"You don't think he'll get any money for the car?"

"He didn't sell that car. It was taken from him. Probably by the finance company."

"I kind of figured the same thing myself. Why did you lend him the money then?"

"Because he was hungry. I can't stand to see a man go hungry when I'm eating. I feel sorry for Harry. He's worthless and he's an inveterate liar, but I still feel sorry for him. He must be going through a little hell now. Because it's come to the point where he's going to have to face reality or become a bum. And you can believe that the reality he'll have to face will be a very unpleasant one. I'm curious to see whether he'll do it or not."

That night I tried to piece together what Gene had said with what I had seen of Harry. It all made sense. But I wondered how a man who had been a Gamma and graduated from this school could turn out to be so worthless. It was a little like finding out there was no Santa Claus. For a while it made me a little uncomfortable. But not for long. I decided that Harry was just an unusual case. I didn't know any other Gamma alums who weren't at least moderately successful.

From then on I began to watch Harry with interest. I was dying for a good chance to talk to him and several times I even asked him to join me for a meal. But he had always just finished or wasn't hungry then or something. Once when I was trying to find him I looked in his room. He wasn't there so I went in and looked around a little. The first thing I noticed was a half-empty loaf of bread on his desk. I looked around to see if I could find any more food, but there was nothing. Only some bits of cheese on the floor that were being carried off by ants.

While I was looking, I noticed a rough draft of a letter in his desk drawer. It was an application for a job as a sporting goods salesman. In his list of qualifications he stated that his last job had been as a salesman with a sporting goods firm that had gone out of business. He said nothing about ever having been an insurance salesman. I didn't know what to think.

The only other thing I saw that interested me was a pile of dirty clothes on his closet floor. I remembered then how Harry had been wearing the same clothes for so long.

I was really beginning to feel like a detective. The next day I dug up all the old fraternity records and looked up Harry. I

found out that he lived in a small town in the Eastern part of the state and that his father was manager of a textile factory there. At the bottom of the page, added in a later hand was, "Occupation—Insurance salesman for State Life."

For the first time that summer I began to think about collecting the rent from Harry. I must admit, I hadn't been much of a house manager. As a matter of fact, Gene Birch was the only person I had collected the rent from. And that was only because he walked in my room with the money one night.

By this time there were several bills overdue, so I decided I'd better get busy and collect some rent to pay them.

I found Harry in his room late one night. The lights were on and he was lying on his unmade bed, fully clothed, staring up at the ceiling. The window was closed, it was hot, and I was sure I could smell some kind of cheese.

As soon as I came in he turned his head in my direction and shot a frown-grin at me. The whole time we talked he never got off the bed or even sat up. He just lay there.

"Come in, Pete old boy. Come in. What can I do for you?"

I fell into his armchair and lit a cigarette. "I've got to collect the rent. Need the money to pay the bills. If I don't pay soon, we won't have any water and electricity around here."

"Well, Pete." He cleared his throat for a while. "I phoned about my car money last night. It should be here by tomorrow, so I can pay you then."

I was feeling pretty mean so I said, "Don't you have any money with you?"

He laughed. "Flat broke, Pete."

"What's happened to the money you made selling insurance in this red-hot territory?"

He never batted an eye. "Didn't you know? I haven't been selling insurance for several weeks. I made some good money, but it's all in my college fund."

"Why did you quit?" I knew perfectly well he never had started.

"Well, I decided the time could be better spent studying. It wouldn't do me a bit of good to make a million dollars if I couldn't get into law school. And stay there. So I've started studying. You know, I haven't been in school for seven years. I've been spending five or six hours a day in the law library, reading."

That night I had a good laugh to myself over that. The idea of Harry reading for five or six hours at day was ridiculous.

The next day after classes I noticed that Harry wasn't in his room. I didn't have anything to do that afternoon, so I decided to go down to the law library just to prove to myself what a big joke it really was.

But he was there. His back was to the entrance so he didn't see me. He was reading one book, and there were three or four more stacked up in front of him. I didn't speak to him. I just went out and walked and tried to figure it out. Maybe we had been wrong about Harry all along. Maybe he really was going to law school and had been straight with us the whole time. On the other hand, maybe he had a hunch I would check on his story.

I told Gene about it that night. He didn't seem at all surprised. He just sat for a while and thought. I lit a cigarette.

"I still doubt that he's really going to law school," he said. "But that doesn't mean he's been lying to us. If a person believes something is true and tells someone else, he isn't lying is he? At least not intentionally. I think this fits with the other things we've figured out. Harry no doubt thinks he's going to law school. But I doubt it. If he has enough money to go to school for three years, he surely has enough to eat three square meals a day. Doesn't it seem that way to you?"

"I guess so. The guy's really sick isn't he?"

"I think he is."

"I wonder how a guy like that ever got to be a Gamma?"

"I doubt seriously that he's the only Gamma who turned out this way."

"It makes you a little uncomfortable, doesn't it? You hear so many statistics proving how successful Gammas are. It's always given me a nice secure feeling."

I was being serious, but Gene laughed. "You had better watch your step. Harry probably felt the same way."

For about a week I worried so much about myself that I almost forgot about Harry. Exams weren't too far off so I started studying furiously trying to make up for all the loafing I had done that summer. I made up a new set of books for the house and tried to collect some rent money. And I spent a lot of time wondering what I'd be doing in seven years. Once I looked in the mirror and smiled with my mouth turned down. It was

amazing how that one little expression could make anyone look like Harry.

But after a while I stopped worrying so much about it all. Things had always taken care of themselves before, and I guessed they still would.

I got curious about Harry again and started checking by the law library every day. He was always there, reading with a stack of books in front of him. I was always careful not to let him see me.

The law library was the only place I ever saw Harry. He left the house before I got up and came in after I went to bed. One time I did see him on the campus. He was sitting on a bench with his head drooping down on his chest. I think he was asleep.

About a week and a half before school was over, Harry stopped going to the library and took to his room again. Sometimes he wouldn't close the door, and I could see him lying on his bed, dressed, staring at the ceiling.

One day I decided to make a final effort to collect his rent. As usual, he was lying on the bed, staring at the ceiling. For the first time, I noticed how much Harry had changed over the summer. When he first came to the Gamma house he was sun-burned and a little chubby. I guess he had lost twenty pounds. And his skin was a sickly pale color. When he produced his frown-smile he seemed to be the ghost of the Harry Meggs I had met at the first of the summer.

It was useless to ask him for the rent. He made some feeble excuse about the people not paying him for his car yet.

"How long you planning to stay?" I said.

"Well, I'd like to go directly to law school from here. Could I stay until September the seventh?"

"Afraid not. The house will be locked up between the end of summer school and the beginning of fall semester."

"You couldn't leave me a key? I could lock it up when I'm not here."

"I can't do that, Harry."

"Well," he stared up at the ceiling, "I guess I'll just go home for a while."

The upstairs telephone in the Gamma house was next to my room. Two days after my last conversation with Harry, I was sitting at my desk reading a paperback western. It was about

good taste
costs no more

contemporary

jewelry

handwrought

charles hopkins
of
chapel hill

designer craftsman
over sutton's drugstore

IMPORTED CHRISTMAS CARDS

FINE GIFTS

CRECHES

PRINTS AND FACSIMILES

PACE



GLEN LENNOX SHOPPING CENTER

CHAPEL HILL

Having a Party?

Buy Your Supplies at

FOWLER'S
FOOD STORE

nine o'clock when I heard him on the phone. I recognized his voice right away and stopped reading to listen. As soon as his call got through he started shouting over the phone.

"Sorry to call collect Dad, but I'm using a friend's phone—

"I've decided to take you up on your offer—

"No. I think I'll thumb home. I'll give you a ring if I can't get to the house—

"I know, Dad, I'm willing to start out in the mill. But I learn fast. You know that."

The next morning Harry was gone, and that was the end of it.

I've been out of school for a year now. You wouldn't believe this, but I'm working for an insurance company. I have a pretty nice apartment and date some nice girls without having to worry about being trapped.

I never did see or hear of Harry again. But now and then I think about him. I try not to do that too much though, because it scares me a little.

I'm thinking about changing jobs now, and sometimes I think that the same thing could happen to me that happened to Harry. But the fear doesn't last long. After all, Harry was pretty sick. And he was just one in a million.



NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

POETRY

KENNETH LAWRENCE BEAUDOIN (*Poem, January 7, 1958*) is Editor of *Iconograph* (1940-1947) and author of many poems, plays, and essays, is currently active in stimulating an interest between Far Eastern and American literature.

JIM CONAWAY (*Within Tomorrow*), a freshman at the University of North Carolina, has had poems published in Rome, Japan, and Greece.

RALPH DENNIS (*Letter to Kazuko*), a senior at the University, has had poems published in *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, and many other magazines. He has twice won the Quarterly's Fiction prize and is now completing a novel.

PARKER HODGES (*The Bright Child Died*) is a senior in the English department and has been previously published in *Flame*, *Spectrum*, and *The Carolina Quarterly*.

DENNIS PARKS (*A Poem as a Personal Toy*), a graduate of the University, is now enrolled in the Poetry Workshop of the State University of Iowa. He has published poetry in *Spectrum*, the *Carolina Quarterly*, and *The Liberal's Challenge*.

ROBERT FLEISSNER (*Ubi Sunt?*) is a Ph.D. candidate in the English department. His poetry has been published in a few little magazines. He has published articles in *Nexus* and is awaiting publication in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *Notes and Queries*.

FICTION

CHARLES NISBIT (*Day After Tomorrow*) is a graduate student in Dramatic Arts at the University of North Carolina. This is his first published story. He has recently completed a novel. HOWARD WHEELER (*Bureau-Cat on the Prowl*) is a sophomore majoring in English at the University of North Carolina. He has been published in the *All-State Florida Magazine*.

ARTICLES

JAMES MERIWETHER (Faulkner's *Mansion*), is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of North Carolina. He has had articles published on several authors, including Faulkner and Joyce Cary, and is at present at work on a full length book on Mr. Faulkner.

ERNEST JOHANNSON (Salinger's *Seymour*) is a graduate student and part-time instructor in the English department at the University. This is his first publication in a literary magazine.

COVER

BOB SHANNON is a senior in the Creative Art Department at the University. His major is oil painting.

Thank You !

The Carolina Quarterly's 1959 policy has been to give foremost attention to the young writers in the Chapel Hill community. Dr. O. B. Hardison and Miss Jesse Rehder have recognized the need to promote, rather than diminish, creative writing at the university. The editor wishes to thank them for their advice and encouragement.

**These ESSO Dealers Wish You
A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND ASK YOU TO LET THEM SERVICE YOUR CAR
FOR A SAFE TRIP HOME**

ELMER PENDERGRAFT
West Franklin Street

NORWOOD BROTHERS
West Franklin Street

MORGAN'S ESSO SERVICE
Carrboro



OBIE DAVIS
West Franklin Street

Have a Happy Holiday!

**Chapel Hill's Newest and
Most Unique Restaurant**

SERVING A CHARCOAL MENU

CHICKEN

SEAFOOD

SPAGHETTI

HAM and EGGS

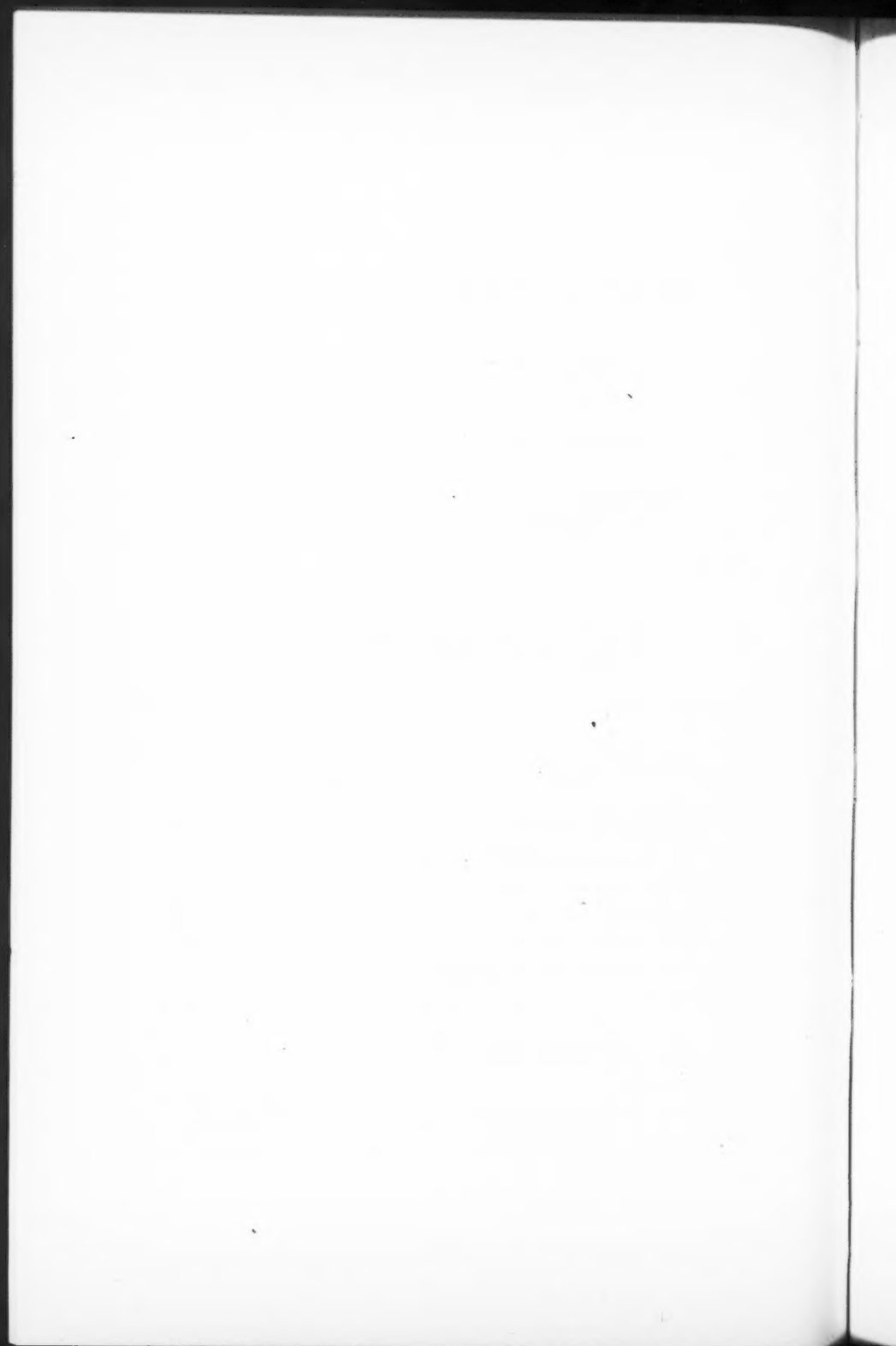
THE CHUCK WAGON

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The deadline for the next issue of the Carolina Quarterly will be January 10th. All manuscripts are to be brought to Graham Memorial or mailed to Box 1117, Chapel Hill, at that time.

The poetry board suggests that new poets aim to be "immediate, concrete, and real." For fiction, the young writer should be courageous enough to draw from his most personal life experiences, rather than from his reading knowledge alone or even from projected imaginations. If he chooses not to write from this source, then he is advised to allow himself complete freedom for fantastic experiments with language and ideas. The current fashion for control is resulting in a loss of the vitality which is initially essential to the beginning writer.

However, these suggestions are offered as guidance, not demands. When it comes to offering advice for people who want to write, the editor confesses, she sees "all through a glass eye, darkly."



Contents

Spring, 1960

Vol. XII, No. 2

ARTICLES

UNPUBLISHED STATEMENT BY THOMAS WOLFE	
Introduction	Frank Kearns 5
ALBERT CAMUS: DEATH AT THE	
MERIDIAN	Maurice Natanson 21
REFLECTIONS ON HEMINGWAY	Gary Soucie 57

STORIES

COVER ME UP	Jim Conaway 27
LOVE WITHOUT WINE	Jack B. Moore 12
DEATH OF A SHORT ORDER COOK	Albert Harris 35

POEMS

NIGHT PIECE FOR TWO VIRGINIAS	Parker Hodges 34
SNOW IN CHAPEL HILL:	
FEBRUARY 1960	Pranabendu Dasgupto 64
WATER LILIES	Eric Pfeiffer 11
FORMULA FOR A LONELY EVENING	Eric Pfeiffer 20
AFFAIR	Leonard E. Nathan 53
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD	Leon Capetanos 38

DRAMA

PRELIMBO	Paul Priest 54
----------------	----------------

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	70
-----------------------------	----

THRILLING . . .

is the word for classical music. And now you can enjoy the thrill of owning your own library of the classics. Today is the time to start that collection of the "greats" of the music world. Come in today and choose from brand name LPs the works of your favorite artists at . . .



207 EAST FRANKLIN STREET
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

SPRING-SWING TIME

Now is the time to swing to Spring *fashions* for men. See the wash 'n wear suits by Haspel, fine Dacron/wool tropicals by Southwick, and a fabulous array of India Madras in furnishings and accessories—at:



STEVENS-SHEPHERD

The Carolina Quarterly

*Continuing the tradition established with the
University Magazine in 1844*

Editor

NANCY H. COMBES

Assistant Editor

ELOISE WALKER

Business Manager

THOMAS PHILLIPS

Fiction Editor

CINDY EGERTON

Assistant Business Manager

RICHARD WINDHAM

Poetry Editor

RICHARD RICKERT

Advertising Manager

SAM MAUZY

Articles Editor

TONY BURKE

Editorial Board

FRANCES PAYNE

AL HORTON

BYRON BALLOU

WILLIAM FACKERT

JOHN THORNE HARGETT

JOE REES

JERRY TOGNOLI

DICK REPUCCI

HOWARD WHEELER

ROBERT METCALF

FRANK LIGGETT

ROBERT RHODES

Cover

MIKE REYNOLDS

Advisory Board

O. B. HARDISON

JESSIE REHDER

TOM PATTERSON

LAMBERT DAVIS

Copyright 1960 by THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY

THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY is published three times annually at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Subscription Rates are \$1.25 per year. Foreign Subscriptions are \$1.75 per year. Printed and bound by Colonial Press, Inc., Chapel Hill, N. C.
THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY publishes short fiction, poetry, reviews, criticism and articles of general interest. Manuscripts and communications to the editors should be addressed to THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY, Box 1117, Chapel Hill, N. C. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

good taste

costs no more

contemporary

jewelry

handwrought

**charles hopkins
of
chapel hill**

designer craftsman
over sutton's drugstore

CHAPEL HILL ART GALLERY

Sculpture

Painting

Graphics

Pottery

Open 2-5 and 7-9 P.M.
Tues.-Sun. — Closed Mon.

at the

Rendezvous Room

free dancing

every friday and saturday night

GRAHAM MEMORIAL

Introduced by *Frank Kearns*

Tom Wolfe On The Drama

A previously unpublished Thomas Wolfe manuscript.

The Thomas Wolfe paper entitled "A Biographical Statement," which is published here, through the kindness of the Wolfe estate, for the first time in its entirety, was written as a class assignment at the end of a playwriting course given at the University of North Carolina by Professor Frederick H. Koch in 1919.

The manner in which Wolfe cavalierly dismisses the topic—his paper offers not a shred of biographical information—and goes on to discuss his concept of the drama clearly indicates that by this time his friendship with Professor Koch was already solidly grounded and that he could carry into the classroom the role of eccentric young genius which he had carefully cultivated while participating in campus social and literary activities. The "two little playlets" to which he refers here are "The Return of Buck Gavin" and "The Third Night," both one-act plays which were produced by the Carolina Playmakers in 1919 and in both of which Wolfe assumed the starring role. "Buck Gavin," which appeared in the initial bill of *Carolina Folk Plays* offered by the Playmakers and which in 1924 became Wolfe's first published work, is based on a newspaper clipping dealing with the capture in Chicago of a criminal who had risked his life to place flowers on the grave of a loyal associate. Nevertheless, Wolfe shifted the scene to the Carolina mountains and employed—somewhat painfully—local dialect. Similarly, "The Third Night," the story of Captain Richard Harkness, "a degenerate Southern gentleman" who exacts vengeance on a cruel old man who had squelched the love affair between his daughter and Harkness, employs native dialect and is subtitled "a tragedy of mountain superstition." Thus, in their setting and in their use of dialect, both plays manifest the influence of Professor Koch's abiding interest in establishing a school of native folk drama.

Although Wolfe stresses the significance of Shaw's prefaces, it is interesting to note that the prefaces he wrote for his own one-act plays are of little interest and, in fact, express little more than Professor Koch's favorite admonition that the dramatist should deal only with the familiar in both subject matter and characters.

Despite the intense seriousness with which young Wolfe here regards his amateurish dramatic productions, the plays were soon to prove a burden, and it is interesting to note the increasing

embarrassment which they caused him as he matured both as man and writer. Two letters, carefully preserved by Professor Koch in the same scrapbook—now on file in the North Carolina Collection of the Library of the University of North Carolina—in which “A Biographical Statement” appears, recall this gradual change of heart. In an undated letter to Koch from New York, apparently written while Wolfe was teaching at New York University, the young writer expresses his fears at Koch’s plan (which, incidentally, was carried out) to include “Buck Gavin” in the second series of *Carolina Folk Plays*, published in 1924:

“My dear prof—your courage is boundless. I was desperately afraid to have that one act published. I was so young, so raw, so green. I still am, of course. Don’t think I am ashamed of that work—although I think all of us ought to feel a certain amount of shame for all our work. That’s only decent. But I know that I wrote that play at one sitting, on a rainy October afternoon, when I was 17 or 18. And I knew nothing of the theater at the time. Possibly I had seen a half dozen real plays in all my life.”

By the time *Look Homeward, Angel* had established Wolfe as an important young writer, he had come to regard his “two little playlets” as millstones. In a letter to Koch dated October 9, 1933, in which he thanks his former professor for a four-dollar check in payment of royalties on “Buck Gavin,” he broaches the subject delicately but firmly:

I want to say something to you now about this play for which you have sent me the royalty check. If I thought for a moment there was any danger of my being misunderstood, I would not say it, but I have known you for fifteen years and I feel that I know you pretty well by now and I know you are my friend and will understand what I want to say. And what I want to say is this:

I am very proud to call myself one of the Playmakers and to remember that I belonged to the first group you ever taught at Chapel Hill, and had a part in writing and producing some of the first plays. I want to tell you also that no one is prouder than I of the great success the Playmakers have achieved and of the distinguished work which has been done by them. The fact that I was associated with that work at the very beginning, even in an obscure and unimportant fashion, is another fact I am proud of. I am also proud to remember that the two little one-act plays that I wrote were among the first plays put on by the Playmakers and that I acted in them and helped produce them. I was a boy of eighteen years when I wrote those plays and I wrote each of them in a few hours because I did not then understand what heart-breaking and agonizing work writing is and I think those plays show this and are fair samples of the work of a boy who did not know what hard work was and who wrote them in a few hours. But I do not think they are fair samples of the best which the Playmakers can do and have done, nor of the best in me. I therefore want to ask you, as my old friend, who will not misunderstand my plain and sincere feeling in this matter, that you do not allow either of these plays to be used again for production.

I should like to be remembered as a Playmaker and as one who had the honor to be a member of that pioneer first group, but I do not want to be remembered for the work which a careless boy did.

One note in Wolfe's "Biographical Statement" seems strangely discordant in view of his later writings. His admiration for the indignation Shaw "manifests in regard to social abuses of the time" and his call for "blazing indignation" to "combat effectively the cataclysmic evils that have endangered the world's freedom" appear at first glance to be merely platitudinous undergraduate bravado. One does not ordinarily regard Wolfe as a writer concerned with social abuses. In fact, despite the characterization of Eugene Gant in *Look Homeward, Angel*, the picture of Wolfe during his student days which is sometimes presented by his associates is that of a rather circumspect young man who was quite satisfied with the status quo. Don Bishop, for example, in an article included in Richard Walser's *The Enigma of Thomas Wolfe*, presents the young writer as a conformist and egoist, a fraternity man who was a powerful "behind-the-scenes election manipulator" in campus politics. Indeed, the editorials written by Wolfe at this time as editor of the *Tar Heel*, the student newspaper, are quite conservative: he opposed "Bolshevism" in the colleges; he frowned upon Woman Suffrage; he was disgusted by the sight of intoxicated students at social functions; he was distressed by the unclean appearance of the campus; and he "viewed with alarm" the presence of many moonshiners in Orange County.

Thus it is easy to view the concern over social abuses expressed in this "Biographical Statement" as merely a temporary attitude attributed, as Wolfe put it, to "personal experiences of the last three months" which "have inclined me more and more to . . . serious writing." Indeed, though it is difficult to isolate the particular events of the previous three months referred to, there had occurred during the preceding year several events which might have provided Wolfe food for sober thought. In May, 1918, his friend and roommate Edmund Burdick had died of influenza and in October there followed the death of Wolfe's brother, Ben. During 1918 the Carolina campus, like the rest of the nation, was gripped by an influenza epidemic, and several students and faculty members, including the widely respected university president, Edward Kidder Graham, died suddenly. Added to these somber circumstances was the fact that, under the regulations of the Student Army Training Corps, the Carolina campus resembled an army base more than a university community, at least until the Armistice.

Nevertheless, a closer view of Tom Wolfe's student activities reveals that his concern with social problems was not a temporary concern. At least one editorial which appeared in the *Tar Heel*—

and this was probably his most widely read editorial—shows his interest in state politics. In a piece entitled "Useful Advice to Candidates" and addressed to the two chief gubernatorial candidates, Cameron Morrison and Max Gardner, both of whom had spoken at the University, Wolfe advised all candidates for political office who were to speak on the campus to drop the facade of political rhetoric and recognize the intelligence of their audience. Probably the most striking example of young Wolfe's interest in social problems, though, was his concern with the labor movement in the South. In his junior year he was awarded the Worth Prize in Philosophy for an essay on "The Crisis in Industry." Here he offered as his solution to the labor problem "Industrial democracy—a system of democratic cooperation in industry with equal rights and responsibilities for capital and labor." Significantly, the awarding of the Worth Prize for an article dealing with a social problem established a new precedent. Until this time the award-winning essay had to be well within the confines of philosophy. This problem of the rights of labor seems to have impressed young Wolfe deeply, for it appears from a talk he gave in chapel, "The Creative Movement in Writing," that he was at this time planning and perhaps actually working on a three-volume novel about the labor movement in North Carolina. Moreover, young Wolfe carried his interest in social problems to Harvard, for one of the most successful plays he wrote for Professor Baker's 47 Workshop was "Welcome to Our City" (originally "Niggertown") which dealt with the race conflict in Asheville, or "Altamont," as it was called in the play.

Finally, despite the fact that Wolfe's novels are not usually noteworthy for their social consciousness, his last work, *You Can't Go Home Again*, presents a bitter picture of the average man's plight during the Depression and a concomitant rage at the materialistic view of life which sanctioned gross inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Moreover, the same work presents Wolfe's most mature political outlook. He is so deeply concerned with warning America of the threat of Facism, which he had encountered in Nazi Germany, and of underlining his realization that "it can happen here," that he rids himself of much of the excess verbal baggage so characteristic of his novels and writes in a fashion which is eloquently direct. In fact, "I Have A Thing to Tell You," the article which described Wolfe's experiences in Nazi Germany for a March, 1937, issue of *New Republic* and which was later incorporated in *You Can't Go Home Again*, is undoubtedly Wolfe's most straightforward and objective piece of writing. Thus in his last work Wolfe answered the call for "blazing indignation" sounded in his youthful "Biographical Statement."

A Previously Unpublished Statement By Thomas Wolfe

A BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

My writing has undoubtedly been influenced by the work of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, of whom I am an ardent admirer. Of course, there is not the slightest suggestion of the satiric element in either of the two little playlets I have just written. But, nevertheless, in the style, in the rather elaborate explanations of the type of characters, in the extraordinary freedom with which the author's personal views and opinions are expressed in the directions,—in all these I see now the influence of Shaw.

This characteristic of my writings has become evident to me only at this time when, after their completion, I can give them that searching analysis that is made possible by retrospect.

When I see the influence Mr. Shaw has unconsciously exerted on me it is but natural that I should analyze his plays also to find "the reason why." And I have reached this conclusion: Shaw's satirical writing has not influenced me, only so far as their brilliant, scintillating wit have compelled my admiration.

By no stretch of the imagination could I picture myself as a satirist. Indeed, I started my modest career as a "play-maker" by attempting a satiric comedy. It was a false start. It was a dismal failure.

No, it is not the Irishman's satire that interested me, but his prefatory remarks to his plays. To me, Bernard Shaw's prefaces are the most wonderful things he has written. They are far superior to his plays. Why? I believe it is because of the absolute sincerity of his expression of views, and because of the strong, *direct* indignation he manifests in regard to social abuses of the times. Perhaps, also, personal experiences of the last three months have inclined me more and more to straight-forward, clear-cut absolutely serious writing.

But it seems to me that in a time of world-woe—woe that has assumed the proportions of a cataclysm,—we have no place for the witty, but indirect method of satiric writing. As has been remarked in an article along this line, the world of today has no ears for the "tiny clap of the doll's house door"—a noise which satirists over fondly thought was heard around the world. No! What we need to remedy these existing evils is not writing of this type. We need (and I will again quote) "the blazing indignation, the thundertones

Copyright, 1960, Pincus Berner as Administrator, C.T.A. of the Estate of Thomas Wolfe.

of a Carlyle—or an Isaiah!" In other words, satire has its province, but it cannot cope with the problems that vitally and immediately face mankind. To substantiate this, I point to the paucity of successful satire written during the world war, and to the additional fact that absolutely no writing of this type has been produced which can combat effectively the cataclysmic evils that have endangered the world's freedom.

So blind were pre-war satirists, so foolish in their wisdom, that one young British satirist remarked that there were but two themes left to the modern reform writer—"Money and Sex". Today we laugh at his statement as that of a precocious but misguided youth.

What has all this to do with these two playlets of mine? On the face of it, nothing. I may remark here, however, that in these playlets I have written about types of people who [sic] I have known and concerning those I feel qualified to write about. Of course, I do not preach, nor do I teach, perhaps. There are no "thunder tones," or "blazing indignation" in them. Yet, they have suggested a train of thought that intensely interests me and is, I believe, of vital importance to me. My writing, I feel sure, has been made easier and better by their production.

And if they have affected my writing to this extent,—if they have indirectly caused an analysis of my writing and a determination of my future course,—are they not worth while, even tho they be but the amateurish productions of a youngster, at the best?

I hope that you, who may read this, will pardon the divergence from my prescribed subject, that you will see the connection with the original theme, and that what I have said 'will give you new "food for thought" whether you agree with me in whole, in part, or not at all.

THOMAS WOLFE.

Water Lilies

I would like to write
of the water lilies
but am reduced
to mere admiration of them.

I would like to write of them
because they are not gross,
they are understandable
and not loud.

They are so still that my speaking
is blasphemy,
so deep
that I drown.

I would like to write of them
but get lost in them.
I get lost
in their unerring.

—Eric Pfeiffer

Love Without Wine

In front of the small mirror hanging on his closet door, Michael Scott stood admiring his face, delighted with the dark sockets splashed on his fairly deep-cut eyes by the dim overhead lights. The rest of his face he saw was round and slightly pink, not at all melancholic. The clothes he was selecting might help that, though. Tonight he must look sensitive and poetic and yet physical too, with just the slightest suggestion of underlying carnality. Yes, he thought, he must be both intellectual and physical. There could be no disassociation of sensibility—it would be baffling to her, but not in the right way, and he insisted on the right way. He began the final preparations by putting on a turtle-neck sweater, black and ripped in the shoulder, for the rough touch. Then he pondered whether a white shirt or a heavy flannel shirt over it would better produce the artist. A little tritely the artist, perhaps, but she wouldn't notice. He felt the turtle-neck prickling his skin and decided against the flannel as too hot for the unseasonably warm autumn night. It also emphasized his thinness—it was a bit too big, buckling up bulkily around his hips and gathering clumpily between the shoulder blades in the hollow of his back. It was impossible to look skinny and sexual. He then decided to shave. His own bodily comfort could not be considered too much in determining the effect. But it was hot, and an itchy, red-blotched face wouldn't do, especially since it might scratch her during a kiss or snuggle. With care he next selected trousers. Good slacks were out, too collegiate and too neat. Besides, most of them were too big in the seat. One cannot wear, with profit, slacks sagging in the crotch and still be disillusioned and sad and in broken-love—this he knew. His levis were too dirty and bagged somewhat at the knees, and he had no mind to play the cowboy tonight. He finally chose his khakis, casual, arty, and relatively neat at the same time. White socks and loafers were the last articles, in keeping with the night's pre-determined mood of youthful tragedy. He wondered for a moment if all this were not slightly phoney and ridiculous, all this for a stupid little girl who possibly wouldn't notice anything in her happiness to be rid of him. Or what if she still loved him? But it was no sense now going into that.

What was sense, he decided, walking over the rutty, leaf-filled path to her dormitory, was bringing along the bottle of wine. Sylvie would appreciate that maneuver, even if she never would actually see the bottle. After all, he had gone to some lengths to buy it,

risking detection as a minor, as having forged his driver's license age just for her, or rather for them. He was sure the clerk knew something was wrong. If only his face and hands didn't sweat so, or if he looked older, there would have been no trouble. But anyway he had the bottle, and he would go along with Sylvie as far as bringing it tonight, that was one of the rules. If you went against the rules, the whole matter was meaningless.

Emerging from the path, Michael walked over the small bit of paved road—the only one on campus—and started to ring the doorbell for Sylvie. Then, remembering again the bottle in his hand, he looked for a place to put it. He could hide it now and tell Sylvie he would give it to her later, and then, when the night was over, if all went as he knew it must, he would come and get it himself. He looked around, took a few steps away from the door, leaned over and thrust the bottle firmly between the tangled, thick stems of a still leafy bush. Then he placed leaves over it, satisfied that no one would see it there, not for a long while. Only a dog might grovel around those bushes, pawing purposelessly, and dogs would not be interested in wine.

He returned to the door, rang, and found that the fate he had come to meet was out, but expected back soon. He turned around, and almost as if by magic saw Sylvie come waltzing along, the center of what looked like, to Michael, a yellow blossom of girls, four girls in almost identical yellow dresses, resembling some gigantic crocus. Sylvie was entirely in black. The flower floated down closer to Michael who stood, a shadowy figure in the soft night, feeling incongruous to the spring-like picture before him. When the blossom saw him in its path, it almost instantly deflowered itself, the girls fluttering away now like some *corps de ballet* dissolving from the princess, seeing the wicked troll. Only, for a moment, a stamen of a girl remained with Sylvie, a thin, tubular girl, uncurved and pale, with an enormous flattened anther at the end of her almost unbrokenly straight body. The girl, Shirley, who had been named after Shirley Temple, squinted at Michael, and nearly trotted away.

Still at a distance, Michael and Sylvie looked at each other, Michael thought rather dramatically, neither speaking. Somehow the sight of the girls bothered him. They were characters he had not called for and could not control, and God only knew the earful Sylvie might have been giving them. He looked directly at Sylvie, with hardness, in order to set the stage, to remove it from any faint remembrance of the, to him, unscheduled *divertissement* which had preceded it, to freeze the image of Sylvie in his mind for future recollection. The thought occurred to him that his mind was a gigantic deep-freeze, into which were placed the many vivid experiences of the present, later to be thawed out, examined and

recreated. Realizing how ridiculous this was he smiled, and realizing he was smiling, attempted to change the grin to a mocking, cynical sneer, silently cursing his itchy turtle-neck sweater.

Sylvie moved first, stepping pensively toward Michael. "Hello, Michael. I'm sorry I wasn't in, I just had to get . . ." she inhaled deeply, sadly, ". . . a breath of fresh air. A few of the girls joined me. Shirley was explaining existentialism to us." Sylvie smiled proudly, "She said that I was an existentialist."

"Why is that?"

"I'm not sure. It was all very clear. Shirley's real clever, don't you think? But complex too. I couldn't explain it, but I guess I'm one." Then Sylvie stopped talking, and took both Michael's hands in hers, and pressed them tightly to the top of her black sweater. She looked at his arms, then up into his eyes, and said "But that's not important, not really important, I guess."

Michael took his hands away, not knowing exactly what to do. He blurted "Well, I didn't mind you being late. Tonight's not a night," he said wistfully, "to be hurried." Not wanting the evening to become lugubrious too quickly, he said briskly, "Say, let's take a walk to our place. Maybe we'll see just how existential you are. And don't worry, I'm a fundamentalistic atheist myself." Still holding Michael's sweating hand, now pressing it close to her hip, Sylvie agreed. While walking along, Michael remembered to stand straightly and heroically, making himself, he hoped, appear taller, and stronger and more artistic. He thought of himself as a combination Lord Byron and Studs Lonigan. Sylvie still held his hand on her hip. They walked silently, looking at each other occasionally and smiling enigmatically. Michael liked looking at Sylvie, seeing her jutting pouting buttocks waddle. She was built something like a duck at that, a duck with breasts, large but not sexless, definitely a young girl's breasts. Some girls, Michael thought, have chests, others have bosoms, but Sylvie, thank God, had breasts. And legs too, short, nicely shaped legs, although tonight they were fitted in ugly existential black stockings. Suddenly Sylvie stopped. "Michael, didn't you bring the wine? You promised you would."

"The libation, red as the blood on Salome's lips, heavy, sweet, intoxicating in excess, and self-expulsive too? Did I bring it?"

"What? What did you say Michael? I wasn't concentrating. The wine, did you bring it?"

Michael, said simply, "Yes," horrified at his own ineptitude, at his feeble, ill-timed humor, at failing to maintain the night's mood. Tonight he must be dark and tragic, a man of a few, pained words, consistent only to black-visaged melancholy. He had brought her here, he had worked it all out, he had told her that tonight's tender

evening was special, that it was crucial, basal, or at least he had implied this. "Yes, I brought it. I picked it up this afternoon. I hid it by your dormitory. Don't worry, it's by the door but no one will find it. No one's going to crawl around in those bushes tonight. We'll pick it up later." A lie was permissible. The rules were still intact. If they went back together, then, they would both share the wine. If not, he was one bottle to the good. "We'll pick it up on our way back—that is, if you want to."

"What do you mean, if you want to?"

"Oh, just something I added, an afterthought. Don't pay any attention to me. I'm thinking either one of two ways tonight—very clearly or very muddled."

"Michael mine, you're so paradoxical. Things like the wine are important you know, for what they signify. I wanted this—to share with you, of course—to be a sort of romantic ritual, only religious too. You might think it a sort of spiritual consumption. That's what it always stands for. I've read about it. And I thought it would be a nice note of intimacy."

"How intimate do you mean?"

"Now Michael, don't be naughty," she said, and smiling added, as he knew she would, "yet. What kind did you get?"

"Chianti."

"Good. What kind of Chianti?"

Michael was baffled. He thought of the books he had read that mentioned Chianti. It must have been a big favorite with the Lost Generation, that he knew, but he could remember no other varieties than plain Chianti. "Just Chianti. There's only one kind."

"Oh. Well, I like it anyway. Michael, isn't it nice here tonight? I mean, isn't it always nice on sad nights? This is a sad night, I don't know why yet."

Michael stopped walking and looked around, looking at the trees, colorless now in the night, and at the tall pine tree that was their place, where they had laughed when they first knew each other, and spent all day long, and many other days and nights long, discovering all the ordinary facts about each other, and thinking them wonderful, and each other wonderful. That was how it was, so nice, Michael remembered, placing his hand lightly on her shoulder, turning not quite full face toward her, deciding not to show his profile, which she had always loved, yet. It always received a response. She would reach up and run a finger up and down it and say "You're so sensitive, so sad." or something like that. The profile would come later, deployed at precisely the

moment of greatest advantage, when the slightly drooping, full lower lip, to her not merely a child's pout but a brooding defense against the world, would quiver meaningfully, and jut out just a bit more in the sombre silence. And then the small straight nose must tilt defiantly at the conclusion of the adventure. Now he looked at her face, really a pretty one, he thought, and at her eyes, somehow more dramatic tonight, as though she were being swept up in her part. He saw a slight smudge on one plump cheek and decided he might as well get started. "You've been crying," he said, as unmelodramatically as he could. It was, he realized, a bad line from a bad play, and the slightest mistone would make it ridiculous even to Sylvie.

"Oh, maybe, maybe not," she said, with absolute flatness.

Michael decided this was not the proper start. Only she could explain about her possible crying anyway, and he wanted no explanations from her. This was his night. He led Sylvie, still silent, to the tree and leaned languidly against it, glancing at the sky through the trees, and holding both her shoulders. "One of God's glorious nights," he said, showing his profile. "Think how many times we have stood by this tree."

"Yes," Sylvie said.

Deciding to say nothing else now, he moved his hands down her side and clasped them at the pleasantly valleyed curve just at the beginning of her rump, at the same time drawing her near him. She allowed herself to be pulled tight, but her face showed little expression and her body remained firmly unaffected and relaxed. She surprised Michael when she spoke. "Scott Fitzgerald could have written a novel about a night like this, but if I could just write a short story, I think it would be more in T. S. Eliot's tone."

"But Eliot and Fitzgerald aren't important to us, only the night has meaning, our night, and you and I and maybe this tree I'm leaning on, and possibly one or two stars, but that's all."

"Yes, Michael, that's true. But the most really important thing is us." She tried not to speak formally. "We are more important than the stars, you know. At least tonight. Tonight it must just be you and I." Michael smiled. "You and me? That's right, isn't it, Michael? Anyway, you know it hasn't been going well lately. We've been coming together here a week steadily. You know we never used to do that. And other than . . ., well, mostly, we've barely passed a civil word. Love must be nurtured. If it's sincere, it should be saved, if not, the thread of love between any two people, tenuous at best, will be snapped. If you attack love, it must atrophy." Michael said nothing, wondering why she couldn't speak more naturally, why she couldn't act more naturally. It was especially bad because

he remembered, as she should have, that he had just taught her the meaning of atrophy three days before. When she was natural she was so very nice, and when she wasn't, like now, she bored him, or worse, made him bore himself. Why couldn't she just say what she was getting at? He determined not to follow in her line, but reached up and smiling, stroked her carefully jagged streaky blond hair. How fine her hair was.

"Yes, I know what you mean," he said quickly, just before Sylvie was about to continue. "Tonight we must talk, but talk nicely, and with truth. There is a time for truth, and a time when truth is of no value. First, whatever condition we're in is my fault."

"No, Michael, no, I can't permit you to be the instigator. Oh, Michael, remember when this all started? It was me, you know it was."

"I'm the instigator, Sylvie, not you and not the both of us. Just me."

"But Michael, one person is not always at fault."

"I insist." She could go no further. She could not argue, he knew that. "I must insist. Now, don't be petulant. Listen, Sylvie, let me tell you something. I want to tell you about something that happened to me this summer. I think, though it was a small thing, it may be significant."

"All right, Michael, I like to hear you talk. I always did."

Michael spoke slowly at first, as though each word was a razor on his tongue, to be brought forth painfully, with great sacrifice. "This summer, while I was away from you that time, I happened to be walking down the street near one of those huge veterans' hospitals—you know, where they keep both the mentally and physically unfit. For some reason, I don't remember why, exactly, I was carrying my suitcase. I was cutting across this massive green lawn. There was an old, gnarled, colored man raking cut grass, I think. His arms were skinny, with veins running up like vines on a pole. He was kind of sad looking. I felt sorry for him. I don't know why, I just felt sorry. Well, anyway, he had a kind of haunted lonely look on his face. He was fairly old—maybe from the First World War, maybe he had been there all that time doing nothing but rake leaves." Michael stopped, yet running his hand along Sylvie's fine blond hair, and seeing her look softly at him drew her head forward slightly, leaning forward himself. She did not respond, her head remaining stiffly in a straight line with her neck and back. Her arms were folded. She was bent only slightly at the waist. He felt her body's adamant rigidity and kissed her like a birthday child on the top of the forehead. She seemed surprised and finally nodded oddly. He did not let her speak. "Anyway, this lonely old

man raking leaves looked at me as I passed and said 'Goin' home?' I just said to him 'Yes, but only for a little while, then I'll be back.' He looked relieved, and when I was nearly out of earshot he shouted 'have a nice time,' and I waved back. My answer was not truthful. It was a sentimental situation, maybe, and I did not answer honestly, and yet I think I was right. That was not a time for truth. This is." He looked at her a moment, really glad he had said this, seeing how much she believed him now.

"Yes," she said softly, almost apologetically, "you're right. That was not a time for truth and this is. Mike, I think we should break up."

Her softness stunned him quietly and nicely. He wondered if she had guessed what he was leading up to. He wanted to take the offensive quickly, or his plan and his evening were ruined. "Yes, Mike," she repeated, "I think we should break up."

Glad that she had repeated, and not gone on, he leaned back against the tree again with a confident air, alternated his gaze from the stars to the ground, but not looking yet at Sylvie. "Yes, I know," he said, now looking directly at her, "and I knew . . . I realized that you knew too. How could you miss seeing it? Anyway, we both know it wasn't just some new fancy that caused it, at least I don't think it was."

"Why Michael. Us? How sordid that would be," she said, laughing stagily, "breaking up the . . . affair, simply to, well, to date other people. Not us."

"And we both know also it wasn't boredom," he said, deciding not to say *ennui*, fearing she would not know the meaning.

"Of course," she said gaily, "I never could be bored by you—or you by me, I hope. Oh, no, Mike, you're, you're just one of the most fascinating people I've ever met. In so many ways. You always will be awfully interesting."

"You too will always be interesting, and I may always regret this, but we both know it is true." He did not define "it," not knowing exactly what he meant. But he was certain he must originate the terminology of their break-up. If you control the word, he knew, you control the person.

"Yes," she said, "it is true." Now she was agreeing with him and thank God using his word, and he knew that now he must strike and leave. He saw her clearly, and remembered acutely how good it had been in the beginning, and felt vaguely sorry for it all, and for what he was making himself do. Time was spinning and his mind was attempting to perceive how solid this moment was, and what it had been like with them before everything became artificial.

He said, "We are through and I admire you." He felt a little melodramatic now, but he thought that what he said was true. He put his hands in his pockets and repeated the sentence, and then wheeled around, looking up to the dark tree tops, only slightly lighted by the moon, then down to the darker woods beneath, thick with dwarf trees and ferns. Sylvie stood with her mouth open slightly, almost stupidly, looking at him with admiration. Then she smiled. That was all right, too, he thought. He had provided for that. He had left her that opportunity, that one place in the jig-saw puzzle, to take if she wanted.

Neither of them spoke, both waiting for the other, then she said "I know," and smiled with her small, round face, and then blinked.

"Just once," Michael said, and kissed her as hard as he could, and she seemed to relax utterly. Michael tried to think what to do. He had not expected this and wondered what was expected of him. Her eyes were nearly completely closed, just that small ellipse of white showing that he had at first thought grotesque, and that he had come to know as a sign. But did she want that now, of all times? He tried to kiss her again precisely as he had before, thinking that at least could not be wrong. Then perhaps he could slip slowly down with the tree supporting him, still holding her. She twisted her head to avoid him. He put his hand on the back of her neck and said "I'm glad." Sylvie did not answer, and Michael removed his hand and turned slowly around, looking toward the ground. He remained still and heard her uneven breath. She was now in back of him, looking at him. He was certain she was crying softly. Then he heard her run back away from him. He did not move. He did not know whether she stopped to look back at him, but he thought it would have been a nice touch. He stood reveling in the quietness of the night, in the cool peace that was in him now it was all over, wondering if she might not be watching him. He wanted to breathe in the moist cold air, and breathe in, and in again, and never breathe out. He saw the sharply cut moon rind, sucked in air deeply, sprung away from the tree, whawped a gigantic cry to the bit of a moon and the one star close to it, and ran wildly, erratically, down the dirt road, leaping over the rotten logs and dead branches littering it, almost landing on a stone, and then slowing down. When he reached Sylvie's dormitory he stopped jogging and walked slowly by, walking very slowly as he passed the door, looking into the bushes at its side. The bushes were dark in the shadow of the moon, and he thought he could not go skulking around them now, but he thought he should have been able to see the bottle. Probably the night was too dark now, though, and he couldn't scratch around like a dog. It was really too dark, but he told himself he would have to come seek it later, for sometime it would be nice to drink that wine.

Formula For A Lonely Evening

To walk into the night and discover
a blue bottle, a ring,
or some such colored thing,
is a formula for a lonely evening.

Come, together we'll plunder.
Our plunder won't be divided.
Get lost from my hand, I'll find you.
If my hand finds you, you're lost

till morning holds out its promise,
quanta of light coming fast,
till sun is a gold dollar
in sky's blue bottle.

—Eric Pfeiffer

Albert Camus: Death At The Meridian

I

"The great question as to a poet or a novelist is," Henry James once said, "How does he feel about life? What, in the last analysis, is his philosophy? When vigorous writers have reached maturity, we are at liberty to gather from their works some expression of a total view of the world they have been so actively observing. This is the most interesting thing their works offer us. Details are interesting in proportion as they contribute to make it clear." In the case of philosophical writers, of poets and novelists whose work is centrally directed toward metaphysical questions, the relevance of James' remark is intensified in several ways, and also rendered strikingly complex. The philosophical novelist is not only concerned with issues generated out of the essential terms of our existence, he is self-consciously committed to creating a work of art whose very character expresses the urgency of his quest. A philosophical novel, let us say, is about itself; it is a meta-literary performance which reveals the triple bond that compels author, characters, and reader to come to terms with themselves and each other. That bond is an existential commitment to self-justification, to engaging impossible questions and to the despair of an enterprise that is destined to perpetual renewal. Philosophy becomes the conscience of art.

Too often the interior dialogue between the author and his story is translated into the problem of "autobiography." In these terms, the commitment of the philosophical novelist to his work is interpreted as revelatory of the dialectic of his own life, as manifesting the history of his personal struggles and aspirations. One then looks in the novel for a chapter in the life of the author, and one interprets the hero of the story as the instrument of his confession. Such a translation both obscures the meaning of autobiography in literature and limits its possible range. What is important is not whether an event in a story had a counterpart in the actual life of the author but, instead, whether the life of the novel is informed by the mind of the novelist. The question is, Can you locate in the literary work the hypothetical alternatives the artist ponders in his creative task? Are you drawn into dialogue with his

possibilities? Or are you left searching for the strands of his life? If the commitment of the philosophical novelist is to the urgency of fictive possibilities, the search of the creative reader must be for an author's questions, not his conclusions. And not merely those questions which are announced in the novel, but especially those which antedate the written page and which return us to the torment of making a start.

The philosophical novelist, then, is a writer in dialogue with himself, his work, his readers, and, in a sense that is ordinarily missed in the use of a phrase which should tell us much, with his time. It is here that a more profound notion of "autobiography" comes in. A writer's time is his age perceived in the metaphysical perspective of his insertion in a temporal world. And to say that a writer expresses the problems or paradoxes of his time or that a writer symbolizes the essential anxiety of his time is to imply that his act of creative representation provokes and is provoked by the infoldment of experience in the magic circle of his own awareness. To represent an age is, in this sense, to re-present its cardinal content, to bring once again into unity, into the unity of a single consciousness, the elements that comprise its anger, its pride, and its secret shame. All of the metaphysical novelists have been privileged witnesses to the infoldment of consciousness. In different ways such writers as Dostoievski, Kafka, and Melville contribute a literature of dialogic commitment; it is *they* who are at issue in their work, and it is *they* we meet in reading their books. In our own day, Albert Camus has come to stand for the same kind of involvement. His books and his life appear to fuse in the image of philosophic concern, artistic strength, and human integrity. He has become for many almost the imago of a contemporary hero, the metaphysical man within whose life our own autobiographies achieve illumination. The recent death of Camus, death in a senseless automobile accident, death in his forties, death in the midst of his creative involvement, is the lonely occasion for an inquiry into the philosophic dimension of his art.

II

Camus seems destined for a period of misunderstanding before his themes and positions achieve some security in the minds of his readers, especially his readers in this country. And this is not just a matter of the immediacy of his work, his proximity to the disorder of these times. No waiting period will help to set straight the peculiar misreadings his books seem to attract and his life seems to encourage. Paradoxes have in their turn generated cross-purposes. Camus is thought of as a French writer, as a Frenchman; not only was he born in Algeria, he remained throughout his life empha-

tically sensitive to the world of Algeria, to its climate, its horizon. Camus is known in the United States primarily as a novelist and essayist; in France he was as much thought of as a man of the theater, not only a playwright but a director, once an actor. But there are more important impasses and confusions: it is commonplace to speak of Camus as a poet of the absurd; that he transformed this position in many ways in the later part of his life is not so much forgotten as unrecognized. Finally, Camus is thought of most often as an existentialist. His own repudiation of much of existential philosophy or his declaration of his ignorance of some of it have not caught up with the fancies of his public. Many of his readers prefer him to be an existentialist. That they cannot explain very much of what they mean by such a classification only adds to its charm. The worst of it is that Camus' split with Sartre has been interpreted by some people as the repudiation by an honorable man of a dishonorable Left. Unfortunately, Camus' rebellion in this incident does not even make sense in what we call political terms; we, Camus' American audience, are unexperienced in the apparatus of metaphysical defection. Immersed in what schoolboys call "current events," we find it difficult to attend to history. Dialogue with Camus is possible only if we bracket what we have heard about him and listen to what we may hear from him.

At the center of Camus' thought is a struggle to locate the limits of a radical humanism which at once frees man of his bondage to God and permits him to realize a moral life. The struggle has a dozen roots and manifold reasons; it arises out of a concrete historical experience that commenced with the collapse of the Crystal Palace, the dream of a lost humanism, and it may be traced through two World Wars and the spectacle of disaster familiar to everyone who has lived through the years of war. But the concrete events are merely touchstones for a more generalized collapse of values which has been felt, as a tremor of the earth is felt, by men everywhere who ask themselves how it is possible to be decent in a fallen world. In other terms, the struggle for a new humanism is one consequence of an epistemic disjunction between self and world which has always haunted the philosophic mind. How is it possible to claim objective validity for moral concepts that appear to be subjectively rooted? How is it possible to ground moral truths in a certitude that goes beyond mere attitude or opinion unless such a ground lies outside and beyond man? And if the truth does transcend man, is it possible to live with what one has, with an untruth achieved under the duress of absolute commitment? Camus' search is born of a rejection of tradition and an abhorrence of anarchy. The truth, for him, is neither in the middle nor at the extremes of theism or atheism; the truth has no position, no placement in terms of spatial metaphors. It is instead that tension, that

intellectual passion, and that conative thrust which men can realize in their lives in the very act of moral commitment in a world defined by men. And beyond this there lies a peace and joy which are purely human possibilities, a release from exasperation into love. The way into that jubilation of consciousness is by passage into the absurd. The first category of a radical humanism is the problematic concept of the absurd. It is the threshold to the art of Camus.

As with every term fundamental to a fairly rich schema, the absurd operates at different levels and with varying meanings in Camus' thought. Its common denominator may not be the best way of expressing what is of major importance here. Instead, a definition that proliferates, that moves in several directions at once, that hesitates as much as it affirms—this perhaps is the proper procedure. The absurd, for Camus, is the location of the world in the perspective of human reality. World and self, being and consciousness, can never find a principle of reconciliation. For man the world arises to be known, to be judged, to be embraced; but knowledge, judgment, and love remain fugitive structures. Man is the being who yearns for justification. "I said that the world is absurd," Camus writes, "but I was too hasty. This world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart. The absurd depends as much on man as on the world. For the moment it is all that links them together. It binds them one to the other as only hatred can weld two creatures together. This is all I can discern clearly in this measureless universe where my adventure takes place." The absurd, then, is measure and measured; it is both a condition and the agency of revolt. But there are other ways of presenting the absurd.

Imagine several situations. First, you have quarreled with someone. Harsh words were exchanged. Voices were distorted in anger. A verbal mesh of fury enveloped the scene. Now imagine that the argument was secretly recorded and that you are made to listen, months after the affair, to all that was said. You hear yourself, you listen to your angry noises, you avoid looking at anybody for fear of smiling. Is it not absurd? Second, in the act of performing your daily job you suddenly become aware of yourself as performing that job. So, for instance, you become aware of yourself as being the person who is asking a customer to please wait a moment. When you turn to the customer a little later, you recognize yourself as a person part of whose task it is to ask people to wait. Isn't that absurd? Third, you are asked to join an organization for the achievement of world peace. You don't think that world peace can be attained by such organizations, but you are not sure

how else you can help. You decide to think the matter over, but other problems come up and you forget about it. Months later you remember that you were to decide, and feeling a bit guilty over your long silence, you mail in your dues. Meanwhile the organization has collapsed. You send several letters in trying to get your money back. Now, a final encounter with the absurd reported in Eugen Kogon's book on Nazi concentration camps, *The Theory and Practice of Hell*:

"All prisoners in the concentration camps had to wear prescribed markings sewn to their clothing—a serial number and colored triangles, affixed to the left breast and the right trouser leg. At Auschwitz the serial number was tattooed on the left forearm of the prisoners. Red was the color denoting political prisoners. Second offenders, so-called recidivists, wore a stripe of the same color above the upper edge of the triangle. Criminals wore a green triangle, with a surprinted S for the SV category. Jehovah's Witnesses wore purple; 'shiftless elements,' black; homosexuals, pink. During certain periods, the Gypsies and the shiftless picked up in certain special campaigns wore a brown triangle.

Jews, in addition to the markings listed above, wore a yellow triangle under the classification triangle. The yellow triangle pointed up, the other down, forming the six-pointed Star of David. Jews and non-Jews who had violated the Nuremberg racial laws—so-called 'race defilers'—wore a black border around or athwart the green or yellow triangle. Foreigners had a letter surprinted on their triangles—F for France, N for Netherlands, etc. Special political prisoners picked up at the outbreak of the war, for supposed unreliability, wore their serial number across the triangle, the others about an inch below the bottom point. Starting with the war, certain prisoners were admitted who had a K printed on their triangles. These were 'war criminals' (*Kriegsverbrecher*) and they were always permanently assigned to penal companies. Their offenses were often trifling. Occasionally a prisoner long in camp was likewise assigned to this K company. Only a very few of them survived. 'Labor Disciplinary Prisoners' wore a white A on their black triangles, from the German word for labor, *Arbeit*. Most of them were in camp for only a few weeks. Members of the penal companies showed a black dot, the size of a silver dollar, between the point of the triangle and the serial number.

Prisoners suspected of plans for escaping had a red-and-white target sewn or painted on chest and back. The SS even devised a special marking for the feeble-minded—an armband with the German word *Blöd*. Sometimes these unfortunates also had to wear a sign around their necks: 'I am a Moron!' This procedure was particularly provocative when the prisoner in question also wore the red triangle reserved for avowed opponents of the Nazi regime. The feeble-minded enjoyed the freedom of the camp and were the butt of the cruelest jokes. Eventually they all perished or were killed by injection.

The camps were a veritable circus, as far as colors, markings, and special designations are concerned. Occasionally prisoners were decked out in nearly all colors of the rainbow."

As Sartre, as well as many other commentators, has pointed out, the absurd, for Camus, "is both a state of fact and the lucid awareness which certain people acquire of this state of fact. The 'absurd' man is the man who does not hesitate to draw the inevitable conclusions from a fundamental absurdity." The distance between self and world, consciousness and nature, not only exists, it is recognized. The absurd is not only a quality of man's reality, it is encountered. Beyond the limitations of the petty and the overpowering, the distant garble coming out of the recording machine and the inventory of concentration camp symbols, there is the texture of the absurd felt, handled, immediately given in an overarching design: it is precisely the world which is encountered as absurd. And to speak of the world here, not of its fragments, is to make a claim about "our time"—that its foundation is built of an evil that can never be rectified, that its spirit has no ulterior support, and that the possibilities of transcendence are only toward that lucidity of consciousness which Camus discovers, ultimately, in the simple joys of this earth. The recognition of evil, the rejection of divine transcendence, and the oblique yet purposeful movement toward joy are moments (in the Hegelian sense) in a triple progression. They constitute the matrix of the absurd.

Discussions of the problem of evil in professional philosophy and theology seem to be at a standstill today. Theodicy is, if anything, a contemporary embarrassment. Yet in literature the issue is very much alive, and in the writings of Camus theodicy is again put at the center of our worldly concern. The question, far from exhausted, is given renewed urgency: How is it possible to justify the existence of radical evil? How is it possible to understand the suffering of the innocent? And how is it possible for men in daily life who strive for a moral order of existence to build their lives on the unhappiness of others? Camus is beginning not where Dostoevski left off but where Dostoevski began. Camus' question is Ivan's appeal to Alyosha in *The Brothers Karamazov*:

"Tell me yourself, I challenge you—answer. Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature—that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance—and to found that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell the truth."

Camus is compelled to say "no" with Alyosha, but unlike Alyosha his is a "no" without recourse to Christ, a "no" that in its finality can only hope for man's achievement of lucidity within an ir-

(Continued on page 65)

Cover Me Up

By encircling his knees with his arms and hugging them up close to his chest he could balance perfectly on the balls of his feet. Then by leaning almost imperceptibly backward he would come to rest at last on his heels, crouched there in the darkness with the grass against the bottom of his feet, a huddled imposition of day into night, listening. He ran his tongue across his upper lip, feeling the cracks in the dried blood stopped now, receiving once again that warm taste, blood even though it was dry. He felt the tight hard knot on his temple again, not to see if it still hurt because he knew it didn't, just to make sure it remained, a reminder of that afternoon. He turned his head towards the house, not even trying to make out the words of his mother, just thinking of them sitting there at the kitchen table waiting, and wanting to huddle small enough to pass through the shadows and lie in his bed, silently and unseen.

He pulled his legs up tighter and pressed his chin between his knees, looking at that day as something much more distant than it was, a happening traced in some other springtime. He had watched that morning through the window in the front of the house, not really morning but lunch time now and still Joyce hadn't come home, home to help her mother so she could rest that afternoon, like all afternoons. He was up on his knees in the couch, watching the vegetable man walking past, his head a singular spot tracing a path across the white of the house on the other side of the street, his feet slow and methodical on the pavement. Passing the gate Lane saw the pail hanging from his wrist, empty of vegetables already sold that morning before he ever got up, in the nice neighborhood on the other side of the works, just a flash across the opening of the gate that day.

The old man moved slowly through the leaves of the hedge, head bent almost into the collar of his unbuttoned shirt. The light through the small branches caused minute reverberations in the man's progress, spasms of motion in the patterns across his back, almost out of sight by now. He realized now that the shirt hadn't been grey, lacking the dark line of sweat down the back and no hat pulled down close to his ears, down like he might be kneeling, only his back being visible through the leaves.

It was then that he remembered his mother was calling him, and had been calling him for some time. "Lane," she was saying,

"I have to rest now. I'm sure Joyce has let the time slip up on her again."

She crossed the room and began to rub his cheek with her thumb while he looked at her, still on the couch before the window. She stood tall in her straight dress, obvious owner and perpetuator of the big house, her eyes intent on his face, rubbing at the spot. "You must learn to wash better," she said, smiling slightly. "You don't want people to think you're just one of the neighborhood boys."

He stood to go, tucking his shirt in as he crossed the room, hoping she wouldn't see, but knowing she would. "You get more like your father every day," she was saying as he reached the back door. "I do hope you will try to employ a little more cleanliness in the future, Lane." He felt the tired smile across her thin lips, resting on the back of his neck, her head tilted slightly to one side. He didn't have to look.

The back door had already banged when he heard her again, turning at the gate to see her even taller in the back door, shading her face from the sun, thin and white against the interior of the house, bright in the light. "Tell her that I wish she wouldn't read at that water works, with all those working men around."

"Yes, mam," he said for the fourth time in the space of the five minutes it had taken him to get out of the back door and to the gate, waiting for her to turn back so he could go on. The black checks covering the side of the back porch made dark patterns in his mind, thin boards running diagonally from the top of the porch to the bottom, some running in opposition to the others, with spaces in between forming black checks. When standing inside the porch the sun made bright checks on the opposite wall, and standing there in the dark he watched people pass and they couldn't see him, even if he called out, bright checks of sunlight in the dark, across his face.

His mother held the door open and he could see the spots of light behind her, her hand on the door a little above her head, squinting in the sun. "I'll tell her," he said, leaving.

He closed the gate and started up the alley walking fast, his feet crunching on the gravel and soot, and he remembered Joyce coming home one afternoon, turning in from the street. He sat in the couch, not really sitting but up on his knees, watching through the thin, high window panes the movement beyond the hedge, his sister turning in the gate. The swing hung from the high porch ceiling and blocked his vision only partially, the slats in the back forming narrow spaces through which he watched her slow progression in the yard. Then she was blocked again almost com-

pletely by one of the high, white columns of the house, coming on past it, each space between the slats a proof of her progression as she filled it, cutting off the thin shafts of light from the late afternoon, moving faster and then slower as the swing rocked slightly in the wind.

She stopped on the bottom step, one poised foot in a high-heeled shoe, a hidden curve of her leg beneath the skirt leading his eyes to her upturned face, looking at the high porch. Four chains spiraled downward, suspending the swing in motion over the porch and under a roof that was much too high for that neighborhood. It was much too large for the people who looked at it sitting at the top of the block from their small back doors, much too old for the people who lived in it, deserted by its equals and surrounded by alien frame structures, an impotent remainder of means, pride of his mother, the undoing of his father.

His father meant nothing more to him now than a little man in a dirty vest, smoking cigars in his socked feet, and talking to him one last day with red eyes. He still remembered the musty smell, body odor and cigar smoke that day he talked to him with red eyes, blinking furiously. Then he was gone for an unknown reason, to New York to sell magazines, unreturned for an unknown reason. Sometime after that his mother had been on the phone, looking stern and for the first time he had ever known, flushed. He only heard her say that it was her house, had been her family's house and now it was hers. She had made a mistake, she said, and that was all, a final and irrefutable termination of something he didn't understand, and of someone he had almost forgotten by now.

Joyce opened the door and put her books on the table, walking across the room to the couch where he still stood on his knees. "Have you been spying on me?" she asked, smiling slightly and taking a cigarette from her purse. Her black hair fell long and full around her shoulders, the light from the lamp falling across her face, one dark line between two almost perfect lips, dark eyes above prominent cheeks to the full of the light on her forehead, a sharp contrast of white and the depthlessness of her hair.

"What have you been doing all day?" she asked, sitting back straight against the couch. She blew smoke out quickly, nervously, in oval streams through the light, watching him. "You shouldn't sit like that," she said without letting him answer. "It makes lumps in the cushions."

He sat down flat in the couch and began to pull at a hole in the knee of his pants, looking at it. "Did you have a good day at the library?" he asked, still not looking up.

"Yes," she said, "but it was much too noisy today." She turned her head away, blowing smoke into the lamplight. "I'll bring you a book sometime if you'll read it," she said. "You're getting old enough for a little refinement."

He looked up at her now, her arm trailing off the end of the couch to long, delicate fingers where her cigarette pointed incongruously upward, glowing. He looked down again, still pulling at the hole in his pants. "I would read it," he said quietly.

She blew the smoke out fast once more, and then turned to him, mashing the long cigarette out in the ashtray so that it broke in the middle. "Don't tear at your pants like that," she said, picking up her purse and crossing to the other side of the room. It was almost dark outside and she was visible only in the bad light of the lamp, standing in the doorway. "You don't want to look like those other vile people that live around here," she said, turning to go. "You had better wash up, it's almost time for dinner."

He listened to her hurrying up the stairs, her feet tapping lightly overhead. Turning back to the window he raised himself on his knees and looked into the street. The swing moved more now, the streetlight streaming spastically through the open spaces, dark at first and then brilliant, throwing in thin strips of shifting light, across his upturned face.

He walked faster now, the fences passing him like a crowd of faces, running beside him with strange and unmatched boards, pressing in with old wood and staring streaked paint. Garbage cans leaned at various angles against the fences and walls, the tops covered with flies in bunches, slowly and laboriously drifting from one to another and eventually with night up to the many empty rooms above empty garages, vacant windows on the alley. In the black spaces, dark behind the broken panes where no one lived, where one could stand still and breathless behind them watching the people below, no one ever noticing a white face through the broken pane, watching behind the jagged edges. No one knew, or minded, when he used the strange entrances, up the sides of old boards, without a rail.

Once inside, the dusty, Negro smell pushed him back, rank and damp against him, forcing him out. He would stand there with his back to the light, looking at the square shafts of day reaching out to him through the gloom, waiting until the presence became bearable, almost delightful. In the dark with no one, no one knowing, and then standing with his shoes off at the window waiting for something that never quite came, his bare feet feeling carefully the broken glass and dirty floor, dirty against the bottom of his feet. The iron bedstead rose from the corner, the four legs bending

backward as if it had fallen, the bare springs pushing against his back. He caught the thin metal rods between his toes, staring at the ceiling low and alive with cracks, his eyes closed finally as if he had come too late. He raised himself slightly, groping in the darkness with the one hand toward the floor, for his shoe. It was too late, too late for the wings that were already drawing the shadows up around him, one chaste finality covering him like a blanket, above his head.

Someone passed in the alley below, never looking up, never realizing he or anybody else would be there, in the dark, with that smell.

He was climbing the alley now, to the high point where it dropped steeply down, running in eroded streaks to the street. On his left a wall rose above him, with even, rectangular spaces between the bricks, calculated squares of light extending the length of the wall, up and down. Through them he could see the outlines of a house, broken again by small trees on the inside of the wall, the leaves blocking the lines of the house into changing patterns. As he moved along the wall each rectangular space presented a new group, diffusion of leaves, dark windows, and grey boards. It was light grey in the sunlight, without that heaviness, without the line of sweat across the back and then down the middle, no hat down close to the ears above a blemished neck. He had stopped with the leaves soft against the bottom of his feet, quietly watching the back of a man, down low like he might be on his knees, a man and then something else beyond the leaves of the shrub, almost hidden by the man's back, something he couldn't quite believe.

He was half way down the hill now, still walking steadily toward the street, stepping over the gullies with his head down. It was then that he realized that it was too late to run, too late now to do anything. He became aware that the voice had said the same thing twice now. As he looked up slowly he already felt the five boys on the wall, edging off slowly with their arms, still watching him.

"Well, if it ain't the prince out for a walk," the voice said for a third time. There were two of them between him and the street now, and three behind him, getting closer on the dirty gravel. "I don't suppose you people up in the big house mind if we sit in your alley, do you?" The boy was in front of him, standing sideways. He watched him throw the hair out of his eyes with quick jerks of his head, little whiskers visible on his upper lip where he had already started shaving.

"It's not my alley," Lane said, moving slowly. "I'm in a hurry, please." The boy laughed with the others, his mouth wide with decayed teeth to the gums, and then it closed quickly. Lane saw his eyes narrow even before he realized that he had been pushed from behind into the boy, and the other side of the alley was leaning. The second time the boy hit him he fell hard on the gravel, his head ringing. Mingled with the sensation of blood in his mouth was only the sound of scraping gravel, legs moving fast in a circle above him, wild flashes of light between them, furious patterns against a blue sky.

Then he saw the boy coming down toward him, bending down to straddle his chest. He kicked up through his tears with his right foot, feeling the solid contact beneath his heel, and the giving way. The only thing he heard after that were the words, dirty, dirty, the whole damn bunch, say it, and all he remembered was something heavy on his chest, hitting him whenever he turned up his face. He twisted, grabbing on to someone's leg, pulling himself towards it with the weight still there, and he was saying it, saying anything to get up.

Finally he lay on his own stomach, spitting out the blood quietly, waiting until he was sure they were gone. There were no tears now, just the dull pain and a lump of something in his throat like broken glass, a dry mouth tasting of blood and consuming for an instant his hatred. He stood slowly, watching the boys far up the alley now, looking over their shoulders at him standing there in the afternoon, their howls barely audible. One small boy turned toward him, making signs with his hands, a lone figure like himself, wild, furious, and futile.

Then he was running. He realized it only when he tried to wipe his nose with a bobbing arm, running down the alley, across the street and onto the water works grounds. He ran across the field in a new direction, towards the trees, not looking for anyone now. Running through the short grass he came to the edge of the ditch, the water backing up underneath a brown scum, leaving rust colored residue on the sides of the ditch, slippery along the concrete. He jumped the thin stream of water and looked up the ditch to where it converged to a point and then turned. He saw the tree far at the other end as he climbed and he realized that Joyce wasn't there.

She had already gone but he didn't follow, already running through the trees now, and above the sky flew by in blue patches forming mottled patterns, green, blue, and black. He watched his feet moving quietly in the dead leaves of last autumn, running until he was tired. The shrubbery began to get thick as he slowed down, wiping his nose again with his sleeve. He stopped in the leaves and

tried to think which way she had gone home, without his seeing her. His mother was there waiting, tall and powdery, waiting in the sun. He watched the clouds passing across the spaces between the leaves, alternating blue and white with grey edges, traveling fast across the afternoon sky. The clouds were becoming greyer, larger in the changing colors, covering more space between the leaves.

He started in a slightly different direction and then stopped on the first footfall, like he had forgotten something, his foot still in the leaves. He felt the shadows from the clouds across his back, grey that day, grey through the leaves, through the leaves of the shrub a man's back, grey.

A line of sweat ran across his shoulders, seeping through his work shirt, and then a line down the middle of his back, sweating on that hot day. A straw hat was pulled down close to his ears, his blonde hair growing too far down in the back. He could see little bumps on his young, dirty neck, above the worn collar of his shirt. He was down on his knees, kneeling in the leaves, unaware. Then beyond him, through the shrub he saw the long, black hair, the smooth arm running from fine fingers in the leaves to the bare shoulder, naked and lost behind the man's shirt, a streak of sweat across the back, faceless and nameless.

The light from the kitchen window streamed through the blinds, forming parallel shafts of yellow across the ground, not reaching quite far enough for him to be seen. He crouched on the ground now, his knees and palms against the grass, facing the house. His mother and sister still talked quietly in the kitchen, wondering why he hadn't come home, waiting while he crouched in the darkness, so close to the house.

A chair scraped on the floor and the shafts of light on the grass were broken by a passing figure, hollow footsteps against the linoleum. He heard the back door open, light flooding along the walk to the gate by the alley where it threw grotesque shadows on the fence. Inside the house the light made bright checks down the porch wall, and a tall figure stood in the doorway, looking much like his mother. She was dark against the interior, spasms of light through her hair as she held the door open with her hand. She stood there waiting, the faceless shadow of his sister looking at him, looking into the darkness, without seeing.

Night Piece For Two Virginias

Crisp
cotton
and cool young
ladies
inhabit my
mind
tonight.
Tonight
of august
armpits
and real sweat
shirts,
smelly sneakers
that leave
a residue
between
my toes.

*Crisp cotton
and cool young ladies
and bright Virginia
inhabit my mind
tonight.*

—Parker Hodges

Death Of A Short Order Cook

A long arm reached out and shut off the alarm. The sudden stillness was soon disrupted by a groan, the creaking of bedsprings, and a low curse, each sound individual but following so closely as to blend together in one long sound.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, his thin legs dangling, he yawned voluptuously and scratched his side. With a thrust of his arms he shoved himself upright. He stretched, cursed again, and walked over to his dresser.

Another day. Or night, rather. Time to shave . . . brush teeth . . . get to work.

Twenty minutes later he was standing in front of the dresser and mumbling as he patted his pockets. "Change . . . keys . . . lighter . . . cigarettes . . . wallet . . . Yep."

As he started out of the room, he noticed the bed cover was lying where he had flung it when the alarm sounded. He walked over to the bed and straightened the cover.

Before he reached the bottom of the stairs, he heard the landlady's angry voice. "You drunken bum! Whatta you mean coming home like this? A man your age. You and those no good bum friends of yours! Out drinking and tomcatting around, trying to act like young men. I hadn't ought to help you. Maybe you'd fall and bust your . . ."

Quietly he closed the front door muffling the voice. He paused to pull out a cigarette and hunched his shoulders against the wind as he lit it.

Old man Haskell's tipsy again . . . his bowling night. She'll fuss like hell, but get him to bed like she always does. Believe the old man acts drunker than he is sometimes . . . just to hear her fuss.

He walked the three blocks to the bus stop, his head pulled down to keep the wind off his neck. The bus was several minutes late and he paced the sidewalk, cursing. When the bus arrived, he hurried inside and dropped into a seat beside a window. He looked out the window and as the bus began to move, he unfocused his eyes and settled into his bus-riding trance.

An elderly woman carrying a large paper bag got on at the next stop. She paused at the top of the aisle, her faded eyes search-

ing out the seat she wanted. Finally, her decision made, she charged down the aisle.

Pausing at the seat beside him, she pulled her brown coat close about her big body and started to sit, but the bus driver had picked that moment to pull away from the curb. The movement of the bus tilted the woman so that she fell onto her seat. In her struggle to retain her grasp on the paper bag and to keep her balance, her elbow struck his ear a trance-destroying blow.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said the woman.

"S'all right," he replied. He turned to the window again, but the trance did not return.

"The bus driver pulled off just as I was sittin' down. I didn't mean to bump your head."

Silence.

"Somebody ought to do somethin' about these impolite bus drivers. They never respect a lady. Don't you think so?"

"Yeah. Somebody sure ought to."

He shifted in his seat and leaned against the window. He tried to become interested in the lighted store fronts, but this was impossible. He was conscious only of the bulk beside him. He noticed something peculiar about the woman's breathing: she was gasping, like a chicken when you almost—but not quite—cut off its breath. Also, there was a nauseating odor about her.

The woman shifted the bag in her lap, sniffed, and said, "How many children do you have?"

"None."

"What a shame! I'll bet you and your wife are mighty lonesome."

"I'm not married."

"Oh, that's too bad. You oughta get married. You're missin' the real fun in life, not having a family and all. Little kids are the cutest things. My daughter just had a baby, you know."

"No, I didn't know," he replied. He noticed his right hand twitching spasmodically in his lap; he felt for the right armrest and gripped it hard.

"Yes, a little girl. They just got back from the hospital yesterday," the woman continued. "The little girl is the cutest thing. She's got black hair and black eyes and the cutest little grin you ever saw. Helen—that's my daughter—well, Helen thinks she looks

a little like me, but I don't think so. Anyway, it's too early to tell yet, don't you think?"

"I should hope so."

"Huh? Oh, I think so, too. Anyway, Helen wanted to name the baby Mary—that's my name—but I wouldn't agree to it. I told Helen, I said, 'You name that baby somethin' besides Mary. There's one Mary in the family already, and that's enough,' I said. Don't you think I'm right?"

"I sure do."

"I think so, too. That's where I've been all day. Over at Helen's helpin' out. New babies are nice, but there's a lot of work to be done, especially when the mother is not strong enough to do much. I've been washin' baby bottles and baby clothes all day. I never did like that job, even with my own children. And it brought on my asthma again. Maybe you've noticed."

"So that's what it is."

"What?"

"I said I hadn't noticed."

"Well, it did. All that steam and all, I guess. Anyway, I've been busy all day. I didn't even hardly take time to eat and I still didn't get through. There were some baby diapers dirty when it was time for me to leave, so I just put them in a bag and brought them home with me."

Oh, my god, my god!

The woman continued. "Helen wanted me to leave them alone, but I told her that she hadn't ought to do anything today. 'Anyway,' I told her, 'you'll have plenty of chances to wash diapers.' Well, she finally agreed to let me take them home tonight and bring them back tomorrow. 'What's a mother for,' I told her, 'if not to help out in times like this?' Don't you agree?"

"Yeah, I guess so. Ah, if you'll excuse me, I have to get off at the next stop. I hope Helen and little Mary get along all right," he said as he pulled himself upright.

"Oh, they haven't named it yet," replied the woman.

"Well, I hope they both do all right, anyway," he said. "Now, if you'll excuse me . . ."

The woman twisted her legs to one side so he could escape. As he struggled to pass in front of her, he could not resist stepping on her toe.

(Continued on page 40)

F. Scott Fitzgerald

—Leon Capetanos

The whirl of wheels, the sense of moving
 and bang
 red lights and yellow nights
The morning's screaming, seeming, dreaming
Fading
 into milk bottle farewells
And the up, the big, the samson destroying himself
And the gold songs from cymbal clangs
 wham, crash
Crying from backdoor life and eyes that never had time
What could match the crescendo
 the adrenalized hearts of millions howled
To say hello and yield to the wood-filled melody
That twanged and syncopated through every vein
There were the bangled swishes and bottled tinkles
 the blindness of sun on a sequin sea
That writhed to a nation's madness
And the green-eyed head carrying feathers jumped
Into the kaleidoscope time
 blinking, changing
Cracked glass and a nervous soul
Hidden behind potted fern and wild tapestries, a tragic comedy,
As celluloid desires ran
 out of pagan scenes
And then it paused, drunkenly took a few steps
And
 plunged.

And you were there
Just as big and grand
Living in your ornate castle
Trying so hard for a kiss
 from the lips you were bruising
But before you could think
You were on stage again
 dancing hard, smiling at the grotesque,
Zooming in the night
Leaving your trail and your crystal deeds
You saw yourself once too often
But you loved the reflection even more
And off you flew again
 cringing in the awkwardness of your era's beauty
But still fascinated and floating on a bubble
You sailed up with them knowing their suicide
And you kissed and wept
Still drunk from refusal and invitation
But how clever you were among them all
 holding to the perfume of the time
Marching with it under alien arches
And past the past

From the day you were born you were dying
Slowly and sweetly,
Death could not blind you
It added color to your hour
Your thrills were minute blossoms
Each shock of truth became personal and elevating
Until you broke camp again
 bleeding as it was
 but not weakening
But you were still in love with a charming bird
Winged to be free
And you were dying every day watching her
Her youthful present wrinkling until hideous
And then you
 dribbled down the stones
And the lights had suddenly gone out
But you found yourself alive again
 sick and alive
And then you imagined it all over
 the whirllllll and the shouts

The bugle beams of garden escapades under french moons
 the crash, krash and the laughter
 And the uselessness of happiness
 You could feel the leather life throb
 The pride of carpet walking
 And talking deep words of brave voyages you were yet to make
 But everything trailed your chrome-shiny roller coaster
 the whirl and the shouts
 the boom and the bang
 It all came back
 The broken cocktail tower you built
 And love, love, love
 soft, balmy, wonderful frightening love
 And wreaths and bouquets you sent
 It was always around the corner
 That little bird
 just out of your complete control
 But now it was raining
 cold before the holidays
 And you took a few steps up
 And
 plunged.



Death Of A Short Order Cook

(Continued from page 37)

Once outside he took a deep breath, not even minding the smell of the departing bus, so glad was he to be rid of the grandmother. Looking around, he saw he was only four blocks from the diner. Across the street a girl was walking in his direction and he decided to cross and walk behind her.

Without looking, he started across the street. A half-dozen steps from the curb, a screeching of tires forced him to shift his eyes from the girl. A bus was almost upon him; the driver's face was twisted from horror and from effort to turn the charging vehicle.

Suddenly, he knew panic and he forced every muscle of his body to participate in the lunge which might save his life. His heart clanged in alarm; his blood hurried to carry the extra oxygen needed by his muscles.

Twisting, turning, jumping, he dodged the bus. It zoomed past, leaving him standing in anti-climactic limpness. After rubbing his

face to make sure he was alive, he hastened across the street. The girl, who had turned to watch his encounter with the bus, continued on her way.

As the two walked up the street, separated by twenty yards of empty pavement, he imagined her to be his sister on her way home and he was hurrying to catch her so she would not have to walk home alone and unprotected. Then, the girl became his date and they were returning from a movie. In a few steps, the girl became his fiancée and the two of them were windowshopping, planning what they would buy to furnish their home. Soon she was his wife hurrying home to learn if the babysitter had taken good care of their two children.

His wife disappeared around the corner and he hurried to catch her. He stopped suddenly when he rounded the corner. She was not his wife, but just a girl on the street, and he was a guy who fried hamburgers in an all-night diner.

Head down, forgetting the girl, he walked methodically the remaining distance to the diner. He paused just inside the door to remove his overcoat and glanced lightly at the two countermen and the few customers.

"Well, Sam, I see you're on time as usual," called the chunky, balding man who was slicing onions.

"Yeah, Sam likes his job," added the second counterman. "Would you still like it if you had to work day shift, Sam?"

"At least I wouldn't be bored," he said, walking toward the back room.

"You mean you wouldn't have time to loaf, don't you?" asked the balding one. "Or dream. Old Sam the Dreamer. That's you, ain't it, Sam?"

"Or Sam-u-el the Poet. When you going to make some money with that poetry of yours so you can quit scrambling eggs?" asked the second counterman.

The balding one said in mock seriousness, "Now don't go putting ideas about quitting into Sam's head. Having a poet work here adds class to the place. Yessir, our head will have the best poetry on its walls than any head in town."

Both men laughed loudly.

By this time he had removed his shirt and was buttoning the white jacket over his T-shirt. He walked to the end of the counter and stopped beside the counterman who was slicing onions.

"Anything I can do?"

"Naw. I guess not. I'm about through slicing these onions. Oh yeah, when Jamie comes in, have him fix up about ten pounds of

hamburger. Other than that, everything should be all right till morning."

He nodded and walked over to a littered table beside the juke-box and began stacking dirty dishes.

Customers were few that night and during the spare moments, he would take a cup of coffee to one of the tables and smoke. A wind blew up outside and after a while it began to rain. There was a long time of stillness except for the refrigerator hum and the gentle pounding on the roof.

*Last night Death smiled at me from a mirror
A pleasant fellow He tried to be—
His eyes sparkled as He winked—
But when He pointed at me and nodded,
I was frightened and began to cry.
He stopped smiling
As if I had hurt his feelings
And with frantic gestures
Attempted to reassure me.
I rubbed away my tears and smiled back
But when He wasn't looking,
I hit Him with my fist.
Before He disappeared I saw lonely tears
Escape from His shattered eyes
And slip down the cracks of His chest. . . .*

He cut off his alarm and smoked a cigarette before rising. Being half asleep inclined him to immoderate thinking and he smoked his cigarette slowly.

Is this what it is? Is this the meaning of adulthood and responsibility and independence? To live from day to day . . . concerned with avoiding pain rather than seeking pleasure? And once a seemingly painless routine is perfected, to stick to this routine . . . afraid of change . . . afraid of the unknown . . . afraid to take a chance because things might get worse instead of better?

Then he woke up and realized the irregularity of his having thoughts.

I believe I can exist without thinking.

He had to hurry if he were to catch the bus and get to the diner by eleven o'clock. When he rushed he had no time for thinking.

By running the three blocks to the bus stop, he arrived in time to wait. As usual, he chose a vacant seat on the bus, but this time he removed his topcoat and laid it on the seat beside him; he did

not want another diaper-carrying grandmother to upset his routine.

He rode the bus all the way to the diner. Getting off at the corner, he stood motionless on the pavement and watched the bus out of sight. For a while he did not move, then shrugging his shoulders as if to throw off some malevolent hand, he hurried to the diner.

"Sure glad you're on time tonight, Sam," called the balding counterman as soon as he entered. "Tom's wife called and said their kid's cold was worse. That was about twenty minutes ago. His wife seemed upset, so I told Tom to go on home, that I could handle things here till you came."

He nodded and continued walking to the back room where he put on his white jacket. Returning to stand beside the balding counterman, he picked up a damp cloth and began wiping the metal counter.

Many people tonight?" he asked.

"More than last night," the balding counterman replied. "I guess more people are out tonight since the wind has died down a little. Say, what time did Jamie come in last night?"

"About fifteen minutes after you left, I guess."

"The no-good bum. He's never on time. It's getting so I hardly ever see him. Except on payday. It's like he's not even working here, my never seeing him and all."

Two men entered and sat at the counter. He stopped wiping the counter to draw two cups of coffee. The balding counterman emerged from the back room, straightening his topcoat about his neck, and walked over to him.

"Tell Jamie when he comes in to clean up the back room, slice some potatoes, and slice some more ham. You make him wash most of those dishes, too."

"All right."

"Well, I'd better be getting on home, I guess. Irene worries when I'm late. See you tomorrow night."

"Yeah, see you tomorrow night."

As he was leaving, the balding counterman held open the door for a young couple to enter. Smilingly, they took a corner table and joined hands across the tabletop. He filled two glasses with water and went over to take their order. He noticed shining wedding bands on their ring fingers, so he assumed them to be newly-weds.

"What do you want, honey?" asked the groom.

"I don't know. What are you getting?" the bride answered.

"I thought I'd get a hamburger."

"Then I'll have a hamburger, too. And milk."

"Two hamburgers, then, and a milk and a coffee," ordered the groom.

"No, make that two coffees," said the bride. Looking at her husband, she added, "I guess I'll be drinking a lot of coffee from now on."

The groom smiled proudly at his wife.

Order pad in hand, he turned towards the counter, almost colliding with a policeman who had just entered. He set a glass of water on the counter in front of the policeman and began preparing the hamburgers for the new family.

When he returned to the counter, the policeman had removed his gloves and was rubbing his hands together.

"Not much wind tonight, but it's still kinda chilly," commented the policeman.

"Sure is," he agreed. "What'll you have?"

"Just coffee, I think."

After setting the cup of coffee on the counter, he said, "You're new on the beat, aren't you?"

"Yeah."

"What happened to Jamison, the guy who used to have this beat?"

"The captain figured he was getting too old for night work, so he put him on day shift."

"I'll miss old Jamison. He used to drop around quite often for a cup of coffee. Seemed like a good guy."

"Yep."

A boy in his late teens entered the diner and walked over to the counter. "Gimme some nickels for this," he said, flipping a half-dollar onto the counter.

The boy took the nickels, dropped one into the pinball machine, and began shooting ducks.

The policeman, who had been watching the boy, asked, "Do you have much trouble with young punks like that in here?"

"No, not much. Once in awhile a couple of them will get into an argument, but nothing ever comes of it."

"I don't know what comes over kids like him sometimes. From nice homes, good families, intelligent kids with money, yet they get picked up for something like stealing hubcaps. If they were hungry, it would be something else again, but they don't need the money."

"Maybe they were lonely."

"Lonely, hell! They had friends."

"I don't know. Real friends? It's getting so people can't communicate with anybody anymore. Like all a father can give his kids is money. There's no real communication between anybody, even. Everybody is too busy doing something."

"Well, just the other day I read this article in the paper where some head-shrinker said families ought to do things together."

"That's just it. They're always doing things. Even members of a family can't relax and get to know each other. They've always got to be doing something. It's like they're afraid to show their emotions. Nowadays, it's unfashionable to have emotions, to feel anything about anything."

"I don't know, Slim. Maybe you're right. Anyway, I've got to go. Here's the dime for the coffee."

"Keep your money. Coffee is on the house for you. Boss' policy."

"That's not bribery, is it?"

"Let's just call it influence for better protection."

"Well, whatever you call it, thanks for the coffee. See you later."

"Yeah. Sure."

His face expressionless, he watched the policeman leave. The newlyweds had eaten and gone, so he picked up a tray and hurried to clean the table. . . .

He cut off the alarm and smoked a cigarette before rising. Being half asleep inclined him to immoderate thinking and he smoked his cigarette slowly.

Is this what it is? Is this the meaning of adulthood and responsibility and independence? To live from day to day . . . concerned with avoiding pain rather than seeking pleasure? And once a seemingly painless routine is perfected, to stick to this routine . . . afraid of change . . . afraid of the unknown . . . afraid to take a chance because things might get worse instead of better?

Then he woke up and realized the irregularity of his having thoughts.

I believe I can exist without thinking.

He had to hurry if he were to catch the bus and get to the diner by eleven o'clock. When he rushed, he had no time for thinking.

By running the three blocks to the bus stop, he arrived in time to wait. As usual, he chose a vacant seat on the bus, but this time he removed his topcoat and laid it on the seat beside him; he did not want another diaper-carrying grandmother to upset his routine.

Something's wrong this morning . . . not right . . . like I'm a character in a dream.

He rode the bus all the way to the diner. Getting off at the corner, he stood motionless on the pavement and watched the bus out of sight. For a while he did not move, then shrugging his shoulders as if to throw off some malevolent hand, he hurried to the diner.

"Sure glad you're on time tonight, Sam," called the balding counterman as soon as he entered. "Tom's wife called and said their kid's cold was worse. That was about twenty minutes ago. His wife seemed upset, so I told Tom to go on home, that I could handle things here till you came."

He nodded and continued walking to the back room where he put on his white jacket. Returning to stand beside the balding counterman, he picked up a damp cloth and began wiping the metal counter.

What is it? What's wrong? It's like I know what'll happen before it happens . . . like I've been through all this before. Like it's a big mirror and I'm watching everything . . . and everybody . . . even myself . . .

"Many people tonight?" he asked.

"More than last night," the balding counterman replied. "I guess more people are out tonight since the wind has died down a little. Say, what time did Jamie come in last night?"

"About fifteen minutes after you left, I guess."

"The no-good bum. He's never on time. It's getting so I hardly ever see him. Except on payday. It's like he's not even working here, my never seeing him and all."

Two men entered and sat at the counter. He stopped wiping the counter to draw two cups of coffee. The balding counterman emerged from the back room, straightening his topcoat about his neck, and walked over to him.

"Tell Jamie when he comes in to clean up the back room, slice some potatoes, and slice some more ham. You make him wash most of those dishes, too."

The same thing every night . . . something to tell Jamie. Told him to do the same thing last night. Or did I?

"All right."

"Well, I'd better be getting on home, I guess. Irene worries when I'm late. See you tomorrow night."

"Yeah, see you tomorrow night."

As he was leaving, the balding counterman held open the door for a young couple to enter. Smilingly, they took a corner table and

joined hands across the tabletop. He filled two glasses with water and went over to take their order. He noticed shining wedding bands on their ring fingers, so he assumed them to be newlyweds.

This couple . . . I've seen them before. They were in here last night . . . or did I imagine them? And Jamie . . . I knew he would have to slice ham and French fries before the boss told me tonight . . . it happened last night . . . no, it's tonight . . . it happened yesterday and today. Wait! Today IS yesterday . . . oh, my god, time is going backwards!

"What do you want, honey?" asked the groom.

"I don't know. What are you getting?" the bride answered.

"I thought I'd get a hamburger."

"Then I'll have a hamburger, too. And milk."

"Two hamburgers, then, and a milk and a coffee," ordered the groom.

"No, make that two coffees," said the bride. Looking at her husband, she added, "I guess I'll be drinking a lot of coffee from now on."

The groom smiled proudly at his wife.

Order pad in hand, he turned towards the counter, almost colliding with a policeman who had just entered. He set a glass of water on the counter in front of the policeman and began preparing the hamburgers for the new family.

What a lark! I knew what those two would order before they even knew it themselves. This is the most comical dream I ever had, this running backwards of time. . . .

When he returned to the counter, the policeman had removed his gloves and was rubbing his hands together.

"Not much wind tonight, but it's still kinda chilly," commented the policeman.

"Sure is," he agreed. "What'll you have?"

"Just coffee, I think."

After setting the cup of coffee on the counter, he said, "You're new on the beat, aren't you?"

Yeah, you're new all right, you young, uniformed, self-righteous Michael with your flaming sword holstered on your hip. . . .

"Yeah."

"What happened to Jamison, the guy who used to have this beat?"

"The captain figured he was getting too old for night work, so he put him on day shift."

"I'll miss old Jamison. He used to drop around quite often for a cup of coffee. Seemed like a good guy."

This whole thing's ridiculous . . . a farce. I've done all this before, said all this before. It's a trick of my imagination . . . it's impossible . . . I'll wake up and find it's just a dream . . . just a wild, crazy dream.

"Yep."

A boy in his late teens entered the diner and walked over to the counter. "Gimme some nickels for this," he said, flipping a half-dollar onto the counter.

The boy took the nickels, dropped one into the pinball machine, and began shooting ducks.

The policeman, who had been watching the boy, asked, "Do you have much trouble with young punks like that in here?"

"No, not much. Once in awhile a couple of them will get into an argument, but nothing ever comes of it."

That's right, Mike. You're suspicious of everyone . . . that's playing your role, Mike, old boy. Suppose you knew I was going to kill you in a few minutes by just waking up. . . .

"I don't know what comes over kids like him sometimes. From nice homes, good families, intelligent kids with money, yet they get picked up for something like stealing hubcaps. If they were hungry, it would be something else again, but they don't need the money."

"Maybe they were lonely."

"Lonely, hell! They had friends."

"I don't know. Real friends? It's getting so people can't communicate with anybody anymore. Like all a father can give his kids is money. There's no real communication between anybody, even. Everybody is too busy doing something."

It's not a dream . . . it's real! Time is going backwards and I can't stop it . . . I can't do anything about it. I tried to give that boy the wrong change, but I couldn't . . . I don't want to talk to the cop, but I can't stop . . . I can't control myself anymore . . . I'm losing my mind.

"Well, just the other day I read this article in the paper where some head-shrinker said families ought to do things together."

"That's just it. They're always doing things. Even members of a family can't relax and get to know each other. They've always got to be doing something. It's like they're afraid to show their emotions. Nowadays, it's unfashionable to have emotions, to feel anything about anything."

"I don't know, Slim. Maybe you're right. Anyway, I've got to go. Here's the dime for the coffee."

"Keep your money. Coffee is on the house for you. Boss' policy."

"That's not bribery, is it?"

"Let's just call it influence for better protection."

"Well, whatever you call it, thanks for the coffee. See you later."

"Yeah. Sure."

How long will this last . . . this living my life over? It's just a trick . . . that's it, time is playing a trick on me . . . I'm forced to live the same day twice! Tomorrow will come and my life will go on like always. Tomorrow. . . .

His face expressionless, he watched the policeman leave. The newlyweds had eaten and gone, so he picked up a tray and hurried to clean the table. . . .

A long arm reached out and shut off the alarm. The sudden stillness was soon disrupted by a groan, the creaking of bedsprings, and a low curse, each sound individual but following so closely as to blend together in one long sound.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, his thin legs dangling, he yawned voluptuously and scratched his side. With a thrust of his arms he shoved himself upright. He stretched, cursed again, and walked over to his dresser.

Another day. Or night, rather. Time to shave . . . brush teeth . . . get to work. Christ, what a dream I had last night! Something funny . . . Oh, well. . . .

Twenty minutes later, he was standing in front of the dresser and mumbling as he patted his pockets. "Change . . . keys . . . lighter . . . cigarettes . . . wallet. . . . Yep."

A foolish thing . . . time going backwards. . . .

As he started out of the room, he noticed the bed cover was lying where he had flung it when the alarm sounded. He walked over to the bed and straightened the cover.

Before he reached the bottom of the stairs, he heard the landlady's angry voice. "You drunken bum! Whatta you mean coming home like this? A man your age. You and those no good bum friends of yours! Out drinking and tomcatting around, trying to act like young men. I hadn't ought to help you. Maybe you'd fall and bust your . . ."

Quietly he closed the front door, muffling the voice. He paused to pull out a cigarette and hunched his shoulders against the wind as he lit it.

Old man Haskell's tipsy again . . . his bowling night. She'll fuss like. . . . Oh, no . . . oh, my god, no! What's happening. . . .

He walked the three blocks to the bus stop, his head pulled down to keep the wind off his neck. The bus was several minutes late and he paced the sidewalk, cursing. When the bus arrived, he hurried inside and dropped into a seat beside a window. He looked out the window and as the bus began to move, he unfocused his eyes and settled into his bus-riding trance.

If I remember correctly, the grandmother will sit beside me now. Oh, no, not all this and dirty diapers, too!

An elderly woman carrying a large paper bag got on at the next stop. She paused at the top of the aisle, her faded eyes searching out the seat she wanted. Finally, her decision made, she charged down the aisle.

Don't get excited, granny. I'm still here . . . yes, damn it, I'm still here. . . .

Pausing at the seat beside him, she pulled her brown coat close about her big body and started to sit, but the bus driver had picked that moment to pull away from the curb. The movement of the bus tilted the woman so that she fell onto her seat. In her struggle to retain her grasp on the paper bag and to keep her balance, her elbow struck his ear a trance-destroying blow.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," said the woman.

"S'all right," he replied. He turned to the window again, but the trance did not return.

Here she goes! Now, come on, you old bitch, talk . . . talk! Tell me about the impudent busdriver . . . talk . . . make my misery complete. . . .

"The bus driver pulled off just as I was sittin' down. I didn't mean to bump your head."

Silence.

"Somebody ought to do somethin' about these impolite bus drivers. They never respect a lady. Don't you think so?"

"Yeah. Somebody sure ought to."

Why don't you shut up . . . don't you know I don't care . . . or is time running backwards for you, too . . . and you can't stop it either. . . .

He shifted in his seat and leaned against the window. He tried to become interested in the lighted store fronts, but this was impossible. He was conscious only of the bulk beside him. He noticed something peculiar about the woman's breathing: she was gasp-

ing, like a chicken when you almost—but not quite—cut off its breath. Also there was a nauseating odor about her.

Asthma and baby diapers . . . what a combination . . . the human comedy . . . tomorrow, today's yesterday. . . .

The woman shifted the bag in her lap, sniffed, and said, "How many children do you have?"

"None."

"What a shame! I'll bet you and your wife are mighty lonesome."

"I'm not married."

No, lady, and I'll never marry. You see, I have a secret. . . .

"Oh, that's too bad. You oughta get married. You're missin' the real fun in life, not having a family and all. Little kids are the cutest things. My daughter just had a baby, you know."

"No, I didn't know," he replied. He noticed his right hand twitching spasmodically in his lap; he felt for the right armrest and gripped it hard.

But I did know, old woman . . . and you hope she looks like you . . . poor kid . . . tough to be born an old bitch. . . .

"Yes, a little girl. They just got back from the hospital yesterday," the woman continued. "The little girl is the cutest thing. She's got black hair and black eyes and the cutest little grin you ever saw. Helen—that's my daughter—well, Helen thinks she looks a little like me, but I don't think so. Anyway, it's too early to tell yet, don't you think?"

"I should hope so."

Your grandchild doesn't look like you . . . can't you see? She looks like your great-grandchild . . . she looks like her daughter who lived before she did. Impossible? No . . . because we're living backwards. . . .

"Huh? Oh, I think so, too. Anyway, Helen wanted to name the baby Mary—that's my name—but I wouldn't agree to it. I told Helen, I said, 'You name that baby somethin' besides Mary. There's one Mary in the family already, and that's enough,' I said. Don't you think I'm right?"

"I sure do."

You're goddamn right . . . even one like you is too much . . . but maybe you'll improve as you grow younger. . . .

"I think so, too. That's where I've been all day. Over at Helen's helpin' out. New babies are nice, but there's a lot of work to be done, especially when the mother is not strong enough to do much. I've been washin' baby bottles and baby clothes all day. I never

did like that job, even with my own children. And it brought on my asthma again. Maybe you've noticed."

"So that's what it is."

Yes, the asthma that infected you at your burial . . . and don't worry about it . . . it'll last until you're a baby. . . .

"What?"

"I said I hadn't noticed."

"Well, it did. All that steam and all, I guess. Anyway, I've been busy all day. I didn't even hardly take time to eat and I still didn't get through. There was some baby diapers dirty when it was time for me to leave, so I just put them in a bag and brought them home with me."

Goddamn, goddamn. How long can this last . . . till I'm a kid again . . . lying in my crib. Farther . . . even farther back . . . regress to the womb . . . then to an unfertilized egg . . . then to an unfertilized egg of an unfertilized egg . . . and so on till the last . . . and the first . . . living cell is dead and there is no life?

The woman continued. "Helen wanted me to leave them alone, but I told her that she hadn't ought to do anything today. 'Anyway,' I told her, 'you'll have plenty of chances to wash diapers.' Well, she finally agreed to let me take them home tonight and bring them back tomorrow. 'What's a mother for,' I told her, 'if not to help out in times like this?' Don't you agree?"

"Yeah, I guess so. Ah, if you'll excuse me, I have to get off at the next stop. I hope Helen and little Mary get along all right," he said as he pulled himself upright.

I can't take any more . . . this goddamn madman's merry-go-round must end . . . I've got to get out . . . get out . . . get out. . . .

"Oh, they haven't named it yet," replied the woman.

Oh, they haven't named it yet . . . why don't you go to hell?

"Well, I hope they both do all right, anyway," he said. "Now, if you'll excuse me. . . ."

The woman twisted her legs to one side so he could escape. As he struggled to pass in front of her, he could not resist stepping on her toe.

Once outside he took a deep breath, not even minding the smell of the departing bus, so glad was he to be rid of the grandmother. Looking around, he learned he was only four blocks from the diner. Across the street a girl was walking in his direction and he decided to cross and walk behind her.

Prisoner of time . . . that's what I am . . . a prisoner of time . . . mommy, mommy, I cut my finger . . . but my goddamn finger's not

bleeding . . . not even scratched . . . all in my mind . . . everything's in my mind . . . I'm in my mind . . . get out . . . got to get out. . .

Without looking, he started across the street. A half-dozen steps from the curb, a screeching of tires forced him to shift his eyes from the girl. A bus was almost upon him; the driver's face was twisted from horror and from effort to turn the charging vehicle.

Got to run . . . thus bus . . . mommy, I see the bogey-man . . . run away . . . run far, far away . . . get back, damn it, bogey-man . . . get back . . . run . . . mommy. . .

Suddenly, he knew panic and he forced every muscle of his body to participate in the lunge which might save his life. His heart clanged in alarm; his blood hurried to carry the extra oxygen needed by his muscles.

Got to run . . . the bus . . . mommy, I see the bogey-man . . . mustn't run . . . can't run . . . madness . . . got stop goddamn madness . . . stoplegs . . . stop moving, I say . . . stop for nice bogey-man . . . no more . . . no goddamn more!

He faltered for only a moment, but that was enough. The bus hit him with a dull thud, throwing his body through the air. The mangled body flopped to the pavement, twitched momentarily, then lay still in its own juice.

The bus skidded to a halt and the driver jumped out. Running back towards the body he shouted, "Why did you stop running, you sonuvabitch? You could have made it. Why did you stop, goddamn you, why did you stop?"



Affair

After the great books, the courtly moves,
The gaming touch that is the certain sign,
She is your partner in a speechless dark
Where every kind of pleasure answers, "Mine!"

Now, limping from that bed, what shall you say
To save yourself from having to confess
What love might be? You find improper names:
A Saxon shock, a Latin emptiness.

—Leonard E. Nathan

Paul Priest

Prelimbo

—A Closet Drama—

Scene: *The Prelim Chamber. Seven Professors seated around a long, scarred table. The chairman strikes a tuning fork, and all intone:*

CHORUS OF PROFESSORS: Throned in mighty chairs so pretty,
Stern for judgment, void of pity,
Sits the high Prelim Committee:
Grimly set to make or spill a
Candidate from town or villa,
Dies irae, dies illa!

CHAIRMAN, *revitativo*: Come for o can-didate,
Can you substan-tiate
Your bold pretention to be li-te-rate

Enter Candidate unobtrusively, taking vacant chair at end of table.

PROFESSOR OF CLASSICS (*begins the interrogation, pattersong tempo*):

What literary models were available, please cite them by the
catalogue (to veer for a moment from the well trod path)

Of heroic invective, eclectic or selective, for Goliath in the
Philistine Academy at Gath?

Or if your weakling wit this question shuns in panic,

Reconstruct the archetypal intervocalic phoneme of neolithic
indogermanic.

(Candidate: Ah . . .)

What's that? Quite wrong. It's *ugh*. And if to my first you'd
given any heed,

You might have remembered that Goliath couldn't read.

PROFESSOR OF FRENCH: Who is the greatest writer in French
Between 1100 and 1105?

With incredible erudition I'm preparing an edition

Of all his poems, none of which survive.

No, it's *not* Taillefer and its *not* Turolodus,

For to me it unassailably appears

That what traditional scholarship of them has told us

Is off by a thousand years.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH: Now listen to me. What is the style
of typography

In the second edition of the West Tennessee agricultural biblio-
graphy?

You don't know? Obviously you have not read my article in the
Dixie Teachers' College Review

Entitled: "Typography and Bibliography: What they can Mean
to You!"

CHAIRMAN (*con sentimento*):

Gentlemen, since the candidate

So clearly is illiterate,

And so copiously does prate from his clacking, hollow pate,

Let us turn the investigation

To his proposed dissertation.

He has said he wants to count parentheses

In the spurious works of the pseudo-Callisthenes.

But we find the subject slight,

Unproductive of new light,

Vapid, silly, vain, effete,

Insufficiently concrete,

And instead, we here suggest

That he count the circumflex accents in the unpublished elegies
of Edgar A. Guest

Available on palimpsest.

FRENCH: But does he have the necessary critical acumen?

ENGLISH: Does he have the right historical sense, the subject to
illumine?

CHAIRMAN: Just quiz him, and successfully I'm sure you'll
do'm in!

CLASSICS: Which of the emendations do you accept in Horace's
fifth book of Odes, line on seventy-four?

FRENCH: Who said, "*Ma cherie, pour toujours, au revoir?*"

ENGLISH: How many semicolons did Shakespeare erase before
entrusting his works to print?

CLASSICS: What was Seneca's daily stint?

ENGLISH: Who is fur my idea in my article and who's agin't?

CLASSICS: *Quo usque tandem abuter—*

FRENCH: *Mait' Corbeau sur un arbre per—*

ENGLISH: And all shall cry beware beware

ALL TOGETHER: HIS FLASHING EYES HIS FLOATING HAIR

ENGLISH: Well speak!

FRENCH: *Parlez!*

CLASSICS: *Dic! Fac verba! Parabulam cape!*

CHAIRMAN: Make it snappy!

CANDIDATE: I . . . (*dead silence*)

Under the mounting tide of recent critical revision in extenso and without offering to defend what would otherwise be a premature evaluation rejected after subjection to the scrutiny of several invincible authorities I submit a tentative what may turn out to be rejected hypothesis in view of the proposition rejected in projected prospectus as hereinafter rejected on the authority of dixie classics volume four thousand and seventy-five with supplement unaffected by the might of the opposing coalition of inhibitions it is my view that in the long run we will all come round to the tentative hypothesis in my thesis and that in consideration of geological time astronomical arithmetic it is within the reach of every modern man of unprejudiced judgment to disprove beyond the shadow of hope the rejected sublimated truncated extrapolated bound in buckram at three shillings a fathom for in spite of all evidence pro or contrary we may not glibly assert

ALL TOGETHER: STOP HIM! STOP HIM! YOU PASS! YOU PASS!!!



Reflections On Hemingway

It is more of a job to interpret the interpretations than to interpret the things, and there are more books about books than about any other subject: we do nothing but write glosses about each other. The world is swarming with commentaries; of authors there is a great scarcity.

—Montaigne

I know that I am in great danger of falling into this same error outlined by Montaigne, but I have been so astounded and enraged by the difference between the Hemingway of the critical books and the Hemingway of the Hemingway books that I can't resist adding my words to the verbiage. Ever since I started work on this project I have been in a Hemingway syndrome. I eat, sleep, and drink Hemingway. I go around applying his theories on writing as strongly and as wrongly as some people apply Aristotle's *Poetics*. A friend of mine even started to look like Hemingway—to me alone—but thank God he has since shaved off his beard. Last week I happened to notice the label in the collar of my favorite shirt: Custom Quality Hemingway Wash and Wear! I hope D. H. Lawrence was right when he said that we purge our sicknesses from our systems by writing of them.

The name Ernest Hemingway burst upon the world of English letters like one of Homer's rosy-fingered dawns in 1926 with the publication of the novel, *The Sun Also Rises*. Since then the reading public has been in a Hemingway mania; either damning or praising his latest effort and restlessly anticipating his next. Hemingway's peculiar and ambivalent magnetism on readers and critics has created an intricate system of myth, legend, and apocrypha that has become so popular that it, rather than his literary efforts, has spawned most of the current commentaries and studies. Readers today tend to become familiar with the Hemingway legend before the Hemingway books. I don't know where I was when the Hemingway anecdotes were being recited, but I feel fortunate in having read all his novels and short stories before I ran into the full force of the legend in classes and over undergraduate-intellectual cups of coffee.

Hemingway's style is particularly appealing to a reader like myself who reads slowly, mentally pronouncing each word and unconsciously following all the "stage directions" pertaining to the movement of characters and the passage of time. Hemingway's hometown friend, Jed Kiley, wrote in *Playboy* that Hemingway told him, "I write for people who move their lips when they read." I don't actually move my lips, but my mental ruminating more than compensates for that.

Although Hemingway's style is one of the most celebrated of the Twentieth Century, along with James Joyce's, it is also one of the least understood. People worry more about how he got it than what it really is. One critical coterie—Malcolm Cowley and Charles Fenton most notable among them—suggests that Hemingway's style is a logical extension of his newspaper background. Others, especially Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson, have long held out that he copied it from Stein and Anderson. The clear objectivity of Hemingway's books make it fairly easy to build a tight case for the journalistic apprenticeship theory, but I don't think this is valid. Certainly a good objective writer can become a good reporter, but it does not necessarily follow that a good reporter can become a good writer of objective fiction. The two co-exist frequently since a newspaper is the best and most logical home for a young man possessed of the ability to write good objective copy.

When he really began to write, Hemingway was hanging out in Paris with other expatriates like Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, Ford Madox Ford, Ezra Pound, F. Scott Fitzgerald and others credited with the shaping of his style. To be sure, a young writer keeping company with older, more established writers is bound to pick up more than the tab, but how much a writer can pick up is unknown. If Hemingway copied these others, why is his work so distinctive, so entirely his own?

The basic element of his style is a preoccupation with avoiding embroidery. He wanted to "strip the language clean." His work is filled with petty, unimportant details that in themselves represent some sort of embroidery, but in the context of the whole work they help build up the tension which intensifies the overall economy of expression that is inherent in the Hemingway style. His own comments on the craft of writing are illuminating and can be found scattered through dozens of books, both by and on Hemingway. In *Death in the Afternoon*, his factual bullfight book, he expressed himself most vividly, and I have taken the following quotations from that book:

A technical explanation is hard reading. It is like the simple directions which accompany a mechanical toy and which are incomprehensible.

A good writer should know as near everything as possible . . . If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. . . . A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.

No matter how good a phrase or simile he may have, if he puts it in where it is not absolutely necessary and irreplaceable he is spoiling his work for egotism. Prose is architecture, not interior decoration, and the Baroque is over.

These statements by the author pretty well sum up his basic approach to writing, and they are borne out by his books. That scorn of the simile stated in the last quotation is not an exaggeration, for you'd have to have an awfully keen eye to find a simile in any of Hemingway's novels or short stories. This is symptomatic of Hemingway's dedication to "produce a truer account than anything factual can be."

Understatement is another Hemingway characteristic. He realized early the effect of advertising and mass communications media on our words; some of our best words have lost their edge from indiscriminate usage. His power relies on a sort of slow motion 'snowball' technique which has caused him to revert to the basic roots of the language for the few adjectives and adverbs he uses. These simple words, although unfamiliar, soon pick up a power that is foreign to their more-used and more-inflated cousins. His particular favorites are "good," "well," and "truly." A reading of some of Hemingway's imitators will attest to the suitability of this technique to leading one astray. Hemingway himself has fallen into the trap occasionally, and these words from *Across the River and Into the Trees* must be the most unfortunate he ever wrote: "Then she chewed well and solidly on her steak. . . ."

Many people have the mistaken impression that short simple sentences are the major portion of his economy of expression, but Hemingway's sentences are neither so short nor so simple as they seem to be. He avoids complex sentences with their involved and reader-dictating subordinate clauses and prefers to use compound sentences with several independent clauses strung together with commas. This simple trick is quite effective since most people read the long sentences according to their carefully drafted smooth flow and then interpret them mentally as related simple sentences.

The Hemingway dialogue is one of this era's most celebrated literary developments, but it is usually lauded as an accurate presentation of Midwestern dialect, which it really isn't.

I was born and raised just sixty miles south of Hemingway's Oak Park, Illinois, home, and yet I have never heard anyone talk in the "Hemingway dialect." This is, I think, a real key to Hemingway's position in or out of realism or naturalism. His characters don't speak so much as real people do but rather speak as real people should. This sounds as though it's in direct opposition to what Hemingway has said he has tried to do, but I can illustrate my point with these lines from "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio."

"Listen," the detective said. "This isn't Chicago. You're not a gangster. You don't have to act like a moving picture. It's all right to tell who shot you. Anybody would tell who shot them. That's all right to do. Suppose you don't tell who he is and he shoots somebody else. Suppose he shoots a woman or child."

* * * *

"Listen, amigo," Mr. Frazer said. "The policeman says that we are not in Chicago but in Hailey, Montana. You are not a bandit and this has nothing to do with the cinema. . . . One can, with honor, denounce one's assailant. Everyone does it here, he says. He says what happens if after shooting you, this man shoots a woman or child?"

Everyone I know, except those with regional speech idiosyncrasies, talks like the detective. I talk like the detective. The detective talks like a Midwesterner, and he does talk in short simple sentences. But the detective is to be alienated from the reader's sympathy, which is to be with the tight-lipped Mexican, Cayetano. No one talks like Mr. Frazer, since his speech is supposedly in Spanish, but Mr. Frazer's speech is awfully close to the classic "Hemingway dialect." Hemingway's dialogue is less true to life than it is true to perfection. The same critics who claim the accuracy of the Midwestern drawl in Hemingway's dialogue unconsciously refute themselves by relating how everyone began talking in the Hemingway dialect" during the fad period following *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*. If this dialect is true to life, then no observations would have been made on this change in speech mannerisms.

This dialogue is often imitated by the Hemingway followers but all too often it turns out as some of Hemingway's did in his embryonic days: the "Nick said-Bill said" boredom of "The Three Day Blow" and some of the early stories.

Hemingway's objective approach to writing coupled with his general view of life gives his narrative viewpoint an unsentimental and apathetic detachment. He has a marvelous ability as Robert Littell noted in a 1927 *New Republic*, to "put himself back into that mood when things were happening, the outcome of which

he did not then know. . . . He really knows the invisible turns in the road ahead, but he never lets on."

Malcolm Cowley once wrote that, "Hemingway was decisive for the 1920's," but it is equally true that the turbulent tenor of the Twenties was decisive for Hemingway. When *The Sun Also Rises* appeared, the literary cognescenti recognized it as a *roman à clef*, and the book enjoyed a sort of *succès de scandale* while the literati searched the book for people they knew. Finally Donald Ogden Stewart, Ford Madox Ford, Lady Duff-Twisdan, Harold Loeb, Pat Guthrie, Harold Stearns and the others were duly identified in the book. The stoic and decadent romanticism of the plot appealed to the flappers and "sad young men," and the book became an integral part of a fad. Young women took to sleeping around like so many small Brett Ashleys; young men displayed their stoic toughness via short, terse sentences; heavy drinking and casual love-making became fashionable opiates. The 'faddism' spread from the novel to its author, and Hemingway became a vague father image for the younger generation.

In 1954 Malcolm Cowley reflected in *The Literary Situation*, "I can't imagine that a publisher with his eyes on the mass market would display any interest in the manuscript of *The Sun Also Rises*—if the novel had just been written." This points up vividly how much the book's neurotic effect on the young literary crowd was more dependent upon the emotional instability of the Twenties than upon the book's literary merit—which is considerable. It is interesting to note that in the same book Cowley displayed high hopes for the success of a then-unpublished manuscript by a then-unknown writer, a book that looks as though it's working the same spell on our age: Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*.

The Hemingway legend was created out of the craze of the late Twenties and early Thirties and is responsible for the misinterpretation of Hemingway's message or theme in many of the standard criticisms and studies. The critics rightly ascertained that *The Sun Also Rises* foreshadowed nearly all that Hemingway was later to write, but they were unable to shake off the spell that the faddish addiction to the book had cast over its meaning. Many books were written tracing the development of the "Hemingway message" and the "Hemingway character" throughout his work, but almost without exception they start off on the wrong foot.

To begin with, *The Sun Also Rises* is not a chronicle or explanation or even a damnation of the "Lost Generation." It is a denial of it; it is literally a threnody for the whole concept and refutes Gertrude Stein's famous remark, "You are all a lost generation." The novel denies the possibility of a generation that is distinctively 'lost.' This can be seen in the very title, taken from a passage in

Ecclesiastes that explains it even further, and in the last speeches of the book by Brett Ashley and Jake Barnes:

'Oh, Jake,' Brett said, 'we could have had such a damned good time together.'

* * *

'Yes,' I said. 'Isn't it pretty to think so?'

There is the essence; all the pages of elation and tragedy and pathos have passed, but the book is basically right back where it started. The message is an old one, that we are but transients on the timeless earth. In this sense all generations are lost. Hemingway himself has called the book a "damn tragedy with the earth abiding forever as the hero." This is what Ecclesiastes, the title, and Jake say, too.

The popular notion of the book is that only the pleasures of sensations have any value. This theme is forced upon Hemingway's later works by critics who have accorded to him the philosophy that Pierre Louys gave Phrasilas in his book, *Aphrodite*: "Perhaps we each have but a single thing to say in our life, and those who attempt to speak at greater length are too ambitious." The sensual pleasures are not presented as values but as pastimes in the face of a lack of values. The entire first section of the book, the Paris section, is almost universally forgotten by readers, myself included, while no one ever forgets the Pamplona section. Partly because of the splendor of the fiesta in the latter section—which is implied more than described—and partly because there isn't a single value in the Paris section. The seeming values of sensation, intensity, and learning to die are introduced in the Pamplona section, but they all wander off one by one with Robert Cohn and Mike Campbell and the others to die. At the end there are just two people left, Brett and Jake. In this situation I see hope, for Jake is definitely a man in search of a set of values to give meaning to a world he cannot fathom, and Brett does show some sign of morality. When she left the matador, Romero, she stated her position well: "You know it makes one feel rather good deciding not to be a bitch . . . It's sort of what we have instead of God."

This search theme is a key to the later books. In *A Farewell to Arms*, the book which Archibald MacLeish said raised Hemingway's status from famous writer to Master, the tangible value of love for a woman is found, but lost. The disappointing novel of the Thirties, *To Have and Have Not*, searches other fields for its values, that of a new social order. The 1930's point up Hemingway's preoccupation with Socialism which was so typical of the American intellectuals of the time, Max Eastman and Edmund Wilson to name just two. The weakness of *To Have and Have Not* might have been due to

the weakness of the author's Socialist convictions. By 1938, with the play "The Fifth Column," Hemingway's Socialism had already turned anti-Stalin, and in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) he had effectively forgotten Socialism in order to reintroduce the value of the love for a woman, but this time augmenting and superceding it with the love for a country, its people, traditions, and cause. The book is, to my mind, Hemingway's masterpiece and has that timelessness and maturity of style and content which render it capable of enduring as a classic.

The next decade saw the end of the search. *Across the River and Into the Trees* was written on what Hemingway thought was his deathbed. The book has a subtle feeling of fantasy that pervades it and is charming in spite of its maudlin second childhood plot. In 1952 Hemingway wrote his latest book, *The Old Man and the Sea*, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize. The intangible values found in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* had expanded into a whole world of subtle values that let Hemingway write his first truly optimistic book, a book in which the hero somehow wins out in the end. The style of the book is of the first magnitude, in that the inner conflict of the old man is resounded against the inanimate sounding board of the sea. This is Hemingway's *Oedipus at Colonnus*.

His two books of non-fiction, *Green Hills of Africa* and *Death in the Afternoon*, are outside the mainstream of the development of the search for values theme, but the latter contains one of Hemingway's most famous and misconstrued statements, that what is moral makes you feel good afterwards and what is immoral makes you feel bad. This is generally interpreted to indicate Hemingway's shallow and largely amoral concentration on the senses. Yet if a person is possessed of moral character, how else does one feel but good after a moral act or thought? In other words, Hemingway is not slighting morality, he is slighting preconceived notions and dogma on what is or isn't moral.

Hemingway is still writing, he's in Spain doing a new book on bullfighting that is supposed to be a sequel to *Death in the Afternoon*. After World War II it was rumored that he was working in Cuba on "the war story to end all war stories." Ten years after the war the rumor was altered. The new rumor has it that the novel is finished and is locked up in a safe to be published after his death. There are rumors about his conduct during the Castro revolution and about what went on during the fight for survival after the African plane crash a few years ago. Hemingway seems to stay in the center of the spotlight, but always hidden by a dark shroud composed of equal parts Indian talk, booze, surliness, and bad humor. All this is part of his legend. Yet this is not important. What is important is that he's still writing.

Snow In Chapel Hill:

February, 1960

The pure tears, the flakes,
Emptying a starving love on a white shock of bed
Have a certain effect on me.

I cannot say that it is you and not the fumbling tree . . .
I cannot say that it's the tree and not the ghost of light . . .
I cannot say that anything I know, or see, or feel
Does really matter now—

And not the otherside of things,
I cannot say.

Only the pure tears, the flakes—
The nervous
Trembling
Clumsy
Love
On
Earth
Is all.

—Pranabendu Dasgupta

Albert Camus: Death At The Meredian

(Continued from page 26)

revocably faulted world. And just as Ivan builds his case on the irrefutable data of the suffering of the children whose cases he cites, so Camus stocks his ammunition dump with the unavoidable terror given in the death of a child. He writes in *The Plague*:

"They had already seen children die—for many months now death had shown no favoritism—but they had never yet watched a child's agony minute by minute, as they had now been doing since daybreak. Needless to say, the pain inflicted on these innocent victims had always seemed to them to be what in fact it was: an abominable thing. But hitherto they had felt its abomination in, so to speak, an abstract way; they had never had to witness over so long a period the death-throes of an innocent child.

And just then the boy had a sudden spasm, as if something had bitten him in the stomach, and uttered a long, shrill wail. For moments that seemed endless he stayed in a queer, contorted position, his body racked by convulsive tremors; it was as if his frail frame were bending before the fierce breath of the plague, breaking under the reiterated gusts of fever. Then the storm-wind passed, there came a lull, and he relaxed a little; the fever seemed to recede, leaving him gasping for breath on a dank, pestilential shore, lost in a languor that already looked like death. When for the third time the fiery wave broke on him, lifting him a little, the child curled himself up and shrank away to the edge of the bed, as if in terror of the flames advancing on him, licking his limbs. A moment later, after tossing his head wildly to and fro, he flung off the blanket. From between the inflamed eyelids big tears welled up and trickled down the sunken, leaden-hued cheeks. When the spasm had passed, utterly exhausted, tensing his thin legs and arms, on which, within forty-eight hours, the flesh had wasted to the bone, the child lay flat, racked on the tumbled bed, in a grotesque parody of crucifixion."

Our world is founded on the death of that child, and our hopes are nourished with the bounty of his suffering. There is, for Camus, no escape from this moral datum. At the heart of man's being in the social world is the infection which shadows his plans, a residue of pus that can never be squeezed dry. That it is absurd that this is the case can only mean that God can never justify his creation and that man is left with the responsibility of accounting for himself in a life made possible by death. There is, however, a strange alternative.

In some of its forms Gnosticism suggests a distinction between the Demiurge as creator of this world and the Divine Being who is truly God. The evil of the world is the work not of the ultimate God but of an intermediary. There then exists not only evil but a

structure of evil. In Camus' terms the absurd might be understood as the creation of the Demiurge, but a creation set adrift from the Divine Being. Man's yearning to return to his source, his divine source, is a thematic element of all of Camus' books. His early and serious interest in the philosophy of Plotinus makes itself manifest here. But against Plotinus and Christian doctrine as well, man is fallen in a world abandoned by its creator. If God cannot be reached, the question is whether the world is contrived in the mold of an inescapable evil. One of Faulkner's characters says, "Perhaps it is upon the instant that we realize, admit, that there is a logical pattern to evil, that we die." Camus' answer to this is given in the context of his religious rejection of God.

In a way, Camus' conception of God and man is the reverse of that of Ivan Karamazov. Ivan accepts God but rejects His world; Camus, we might say, rejects God but accepts His world. And in fact it is notorious that Camus has been received most enthusiastically by the church, especially those within it who sense in his work the existence of an authentic religious dialogue. Paradoxically for our time, the rejection of religious transcendence has become a way of formulating, for those who would be believers, the very problem of transcendence. The question for Camus as well as for his audience is, Can humanism be revitalized? Is a radical humanism possible which can adequately pose the issues that confront men today? Can we live religiously without God? Camus gives us the question, not an answer. How is this to be understood?

Philosophical questioning, whether in philosophy proper or in literature, comes alive only when the questioner is at issue in his question, when he commits himself, opens himself to the possibility of change and upset. This is why questioning is a hazardous affair. On the dust jacket of the American edition of *The Myth of Sisyphus* is the phrase: "a lucid invitation to live and to create." This appears on the cover, not in the blurb. It happens to be the truth. Camus is well aware of the ironies possible between author and audience. In the face of these dangers—the dangers of patronization and phony devices—he extends to us, to each of us, an invitation to consider the dialectic of his theme. On opening his book we are struck with the personal quality of his thought. He is not speaking for us but to us. His thoughts require that we involve ourselves in the struggle to articulate, in true form, the questions that are implicit within us. Camus, then, is a dialectician following an ancient tradition. But the tradition is French as well as Greek; it is French and Danish too. The being of the questioner is the theme of Socrates as well as Pascal and Kierkegaard.

We are given a question, then, not an answer. But this does not mean that in being called to self-examination we are left with-

out suggestions. Rather, we are left with an image of the absurd that is rendered possible by a dialectical consideration of a Godless world. The image is that of daily routine: "Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm." But in the very activity of routine the absurd is encountered: "one day the 'why' arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement." The "why" is not a transforming agency; it merely slips into the work of the day and sticks there as a disturbance. The logic of inquiry here leads, Camus says, either to suicide or recovery. In fact, the whole of Camus' encounter with the absurd comes into focus at this point. The committed questioner who asks with Camus whether he can live with what he knows is really asking whether it is possible to transcend the appeal of suicide as a completely valid refusal to bear the human condition. Camus does not make that refusal. He accepts instead a world in which men define themselves authentically in persisting in an unbright search for honor and decency. The Hegelian moments of theodicy and the rejection of divine transcendence lead, finally, to the prize of the venture, the recovery of joy as the victory of and over the absurd.

Earlier we said that Camus is as much Algerian in spirit as French. This should now be qualified. If anything, he is more Algerian than French. But it is not a matter of political or cultural loyalties. Camus' France faces Africa; his Africa opens out into a Mediterranean horizon. The beach and the sea beyond are more than facts of nature; they are guide lines to a serenity, a way of being, a style of life that Camus knew and to which he remained true. "In Algiers," he writes, "no one says 'go for a swim,' but rather 'indulge in a swim.'" Bathing in the sea is an almost ritual reliving of a natural drama. Like fishermen of the flesh, Camus' young men go out by boat to swim in the sea that brings them its treasures of vitality and quickness. Their return is almost mythic: "At the hour when the sun overflows from every corner of the sky at once, the orange canoe loaded with brown bodies brings us home in a mad race. And when, having suddenly interrupted the cadenced beat of the double paddle's bright-colored wings, we glide slowly in the calm water of the inner harbor, how can I fail to feel that I am piloting through the smooth waters a savage cargo of gods in whom I recognize my brothers?"

The simple joys that Camus returns to or, better, that he rediscovers in himself, are misleadingly formulated, for the vocabulary of simplicity is disarming. Swimming together, talking together, joking together, playing together, making love together—these are wonders that we recapture after the agonies of the absurd;

they are the fruits deliciously hidden in the absurd. But before a return to them is possible, we still confront the daily world of insolence, deceit, yearning, and reprisal. Toward what we must now call the end of his life, Camus felt that he had broken through the walls that make of our world a labyrinth, that he had rediscovered a vein of joy that lay concealed in his flesh. In an essay recording his return to the North African city of his youth, he remembers himself:

"I discovered at Tipasa that one must keep intact in oneself a freshness, a cool wellspring of joy, love the day that escapes injustice, and return to combat having won that light. Here I recaptured the former beauty, a young sky, and I measured my luck, realizing at last that in the worst years of our madness the memory of that sky had never left me. This was what in the end had kept me from despairing . . . In the middle of winter I at last discovered that there was in me an invincible summer."

Evil cannot be justified, God cannot be, but the absurdity of existence can be suffered with a heart that guards its interior freedom, a freedom that can transform terror into a triumph of consciousness. It is here that Camus' style becomes the banner of his cause. His central terms are charged simplicities: joy, lucidity, summer, and the sea. The language of the absurd returns us to that infoldment of consciousness which marks the mind of its author. Joy is the dialectical transformation of man's being into that lucidity in which the absurd is at last shackled. It is as close to transcendence as man can come.

III

Final sections seem destined to raise questions such as, What is the place of Camus in the total literary scene? How much is there in his work which will last? Is Camus a truly great artist? In a way, what difference is there if one answers such questions with thumbs up or thumbs down? And who are we to be executioners or saviors? I prefer to turn to other problems. We have considered Camus as a philosophical novelist. Is he then to be taken as a philosopher? It would be a mistake to answer yes or no to this question without first asking whether the function of philosophical literature is clearly delineated. I think it is not; in fact, the entire region is obscure. We are able to point to philosophical novelists and poets, but we find it extremely difficult to explain what it is we are pointing to. It is necessary to go beyond the statement by Henry James with which we began. A philosophical novelist not only raises metaphysical questions, he explores their nature in the framework of human action. He develops philosophical concepts as well as utilizes them. But there is always a hazard: the writer is most often

not a professional philosopher; is it quite fair for him to employ categories and themes which are deeply rooted in the soil of philosophy and then to claim literary immunity if he is criticized at a technical level? Is Camus, then, destined to be called a good philosopher by the writers and a good writer by the philosophers? Such dodges can never be fair to anyone. Still, they form the first rank in a series of criticisms and charges the philosophical novelist must face. Everything depends here on the placement of the problem. We are interested in the writer as a philosophical artist.

To be sure, Camus' themes are not new. His art is heavily indebted to an existential tradition in both philosophy and literature. Yet it is not enough to say that he has given new life to old ideas. Camus' originality lies in a confrontation with the absurd which ends, as we have seen, neither in capitulation to transcendence nor the chaos of death. The tension that flows through his work is the power of revolt, a living witness to man's capacity to upend himself without destroying himself. And even this thematic tension is at least as old a Hegel. *The Phenomenology of Mind*, especially the sections on Master and Slave and the Unhappy Consciousness, is the best introduction to the philosophy of the absurd. Through the dark and thick tangle of German metaphysics one sees burning the gem of Camus' thought. What distinguishes his work and mission from that of Hegel and the philosophers is, paradoxically, best understood in terms of Hegel and the philosophers. It is precisely that infoldment of consciousness in man which makes him a witness to his time. Without a grounding in nineteenth century philosophy, most readers of Camus have felt this secret attraction of his work. It is Camus himself that attracts us. At the end of the absurd world he describes, we find him waiting for us.

The death of an artist can reverberate in the mind of his public. He is missed in a special way. In the case of Camus, death is both part of his thematic world, one of the central terms of his discourse, and now closes out that world. Here is the prime example of the involution of art and life: an artist whose theme is death dies. We must add this to our list of illustrations of the absurd. But if we do, we must at the same time attend to the moments of the absurd and be true to its dialectical possibilities. An audience always survives an author, but it is then the responsibility of that audience to recover the artist's questions and enrich his dream. Camus leaves us at a time when we can ill afford his death. Long after the tributes to him have completed their course and the literary pick-pockets have run their fingers through his Nobel Prize address, it may be time to try to assess his gift. We shall, however, have to catch up with him, for he died *en route*.

Notes On Contributors————

Articles

MAURICE NATANSON (*Albert Camus: Death at the Meridian*) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy. His two published books have been *A Critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's Ontology* and *The Social Dynamics of George H. Mead*.

FRANK KEARNS (*Introduction to the Thomas Wolfe Letter*) is a graduate instructor at the University. He is completing his doctoral work in American Literature. He is a former editor of *The Chicago Review*.

GARY SOUCIE (*Reflections on Hemingway*) is a student at the University. He has worked as a drummer with small combos.

Poetry

PRANABENDU DASGUPTA (*Snow in Chapel Hill: February 1960*) is an instructor in Indian Literature at the University. He has published a book of Bengali poetry, *One Season*. Another book of his poems is now in press. He is on the editorial board of the leading poetry journal of Bengal.

PARKER HODGES (*Night Piece for Two Virginias*) is a resident of Chapel Hill. He has been published in *Flame*, *Spectrum*, and *The Carolina Quarterly*.

ERIC PFEIFFER (*Water Lilies and Formula for a Lonely Evening*) has published widely in numerous little magazines and has won several prizes. He was also an editor of *Compass Review*, St. Louis until its recent demise.

LEON CAPETONOS (*F. Scott Fitzgerald*) is a sophomore majoring in English Literature at the University. This is his first published poem.

LEONARD E. NATHAN (*Affair*) has published in *Compass Review*. He is living in Modesto, California.

Fiction

JIM CONAWAY (*Cover Me Up*) is a freshman at the University. He has had a poem published in the winter issue of the Quarterly.

ALBERT HARRIS (*Death of a Short Order Cook*) is a graduate of the University of North Carolina. His story had been submitted to John K. Tice's Ethics Course in the Philosophy Department.

JACK B. MOORE (*Love Without Wine*) is a graduate instructor in the English Department.

Drama

PAUL PRIEST (*Prelimbo*) is an instructor in the English Department. He recently passed his preliminary examination in the Department of Comparative Literature. Last fall he acted in the Petite Dramatique production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.



Don't Miss . . .

KENNETH REXROTH

Carolina Symposium



For Dinner Take Her To

BRADY'S RESTAURANT

on the durham road

And For A Delicious Snack It's

BRADY'S FROZEN CUSTARD

curb service, on the durham road

Contents

Summer, 1960

Vol. XII, No. 3

ARTICLES

TWO QUESTIONS VITAL TO OUR CONSIDERATIONS	3
GALLUS SNAPPERS AND JIM CROW NEGROES	6
A HOPEFUL JOURNEY THROUGH THE SOUTH	<i>Kenneth Rexroth</i> 9
ON THROWING THE APPLE	<i>Richard Eberhart</i> 17
THE SISTER FIGURE IN THE WORKS OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS	<i>John Strother Clayton</i> 47

FICTION

CONFIRMATION	<i>Joe Bacich</i> 37
JANE	<i>Emily Crandall Rushworth</i> 63
DEAR SOMERSET	<i>Gertrude Hayes</i> 74

DRAMA

WALKING BOY	<i>Ralph Dennis</i> 23
-------------------	------------------------

POETRY

3 SIT-INS AGIN OUT 'N OUT S-ITS	<i>Jonathan Williams</i> 12
FOR REXROTH	<i>Richard Rickert</i> 14
ON HEARING RICHARD EBERHART	<i>Richard Rickert</i> 15
THROWING THE APPLE	<i>Richard Eberhart</i> 16
I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE	<i>G. C. Oden</i> 20
SAMBO	<i>Cindy McMichael Egerton</i> 36
MARBLE GARDEN	<i>Parker Hodges</i> 46
UNSPOKEN	<i>Henry Birnbaum</i> 60
TERMINATIONS	<i>Henry Birnbaum</i> 61
TWO MEN WE'VE WONDERED AT	<i>Parker Hodges</i> 62
TO THE PICTURE	<i>Dennis Parks</i> 72
A GARDEN PARTY	<i>Leonidas Capetanos</i> 73

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	78
-----------------------------	----

The Carolina Quarterly

*Continuing the tradition established with the
University Magazine in 1844*

Editor

NANCY H. COMBES

Assistant Editors

ELOISE WALKER and TONY BURKE

Business Manager

THOMAS PHILLIPS

Assistant Business Manager

RICHARD WINDHAM

Advertising Manager

SAM MAUZY

Fiction Editor

CINDY EGERTON

Poetry Editor

RICHARD RICKERT

Articles Editor

JOHN K. TICE

Editorial Board

FRANCES PAYNE

AL HORTON

BYRON BALLOU

WILLIAM FACKERT

MARY ANN RICKERT

JERRY TOGNOLI

DICK REPPUCCI

MICHAEL ROBERTSON

HOWARD WHEELER

ROBERT METCALF

ROBERT RHODES

MAXINE STERN

Cover

WILLIAM SUTTLE

Advisory Board

O. B. HARDISON

JESSIE REHDER

TOM PATTERSON

LAMBERT DAVIS

Copyright 1960 by THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY

THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY is published three times annually at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Subscription Rates are \$1.25 per year. Foreign Subscriptions are \$1.75 per year. Printed and bound by Colonial Press, Inc., Chapel Hill, N. C. THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY publishes short fiction, poetry, reviews, criticism and articles of general interest. Manuscripts and communications to the editors should be addressed to THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY, Box 1117, Chapel Hill, N. C. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Kenneth Rexroth

Two Questions Vital To Our Civilization

Two subjects that interest me very much at present are, first, community integration, how we can function at the highest level and get the most out of life in the modern world that is overtaking us with its dense population, its commercial culture and its conflicting interest groups, and, secondly, the picture we have of ourselves as modern men—what do we mean to ourselves, what do we want out of life, here, rushing into time, 10 years past the half century mark?

When you come down to it, having taken these two problems apart, I think they are going to be two aspects of one problem—in the long run it is the problem of civilization, the meaning men give to their life together.

Circumstances have conspired to give me new and fresh material to feed just these interests. An agent has arranged a lecture tour for me through the South, up to New York, around there for a couple of weeks, and then back across the Midwest.

I want to have plenty of time to talk to people about integration, not about Integration with a capital I, but about the kind of community that is going to come out of the struggles that are going on now. I want to ask a lot of people, Negro and white, scholars and ordinary humans, "What kind of world is there going to be, in your opinion, below the Mason-Dixon Line in another 20 years, and how do you picture yourself then, living in it?"

Similar questions could be asked all over the world, in great and small areas of conflict. "How is it all going to turn out, do you think?" So many people are blind partisans, struggling through life and with each other with no imaginable end in view, victims of momentary slogans and ancient prejudices. Behind them are men with clear ideas and well defined aims. Khrushchev thinks the 21st will be a Communist Century. Many people besides Nkrumah and Tom Mboya think a great new civilization will arise in Africa. Chou En-lai has another idea. What idea do we have, leaders and ordinary people in America, of our future as individuals and as a group?

Recently I had dinner with a group of literary, theatrical, academic and professional cronies in Jack's. San Francisco's leading director told an amusing story of his futile efforts to work with a currently successful novelist. He made the observation, "Like a lot of writers, he is unable to get along with his peers." This started a discussion of why so many artists and writers, and not all of them highbrows, by any means, are unable to get along with anybody except those who offer them no competition or resistance. Many of course, can't get along with anybody at all. Partly this is just the high strung nerves and concentrated interests of the trade of being a creative person. The man who carved the Sphinx was probably temperamental. In the modern world it is something more. Even if he isn't temperamental, and usually, after a few years have gone by, it turns out that he really hasn't been, the average writer or artist in our society considers himself completely at odds with everybody in his environment, a rebel, an outcast, and a stern denouncer of evil livers.

We have put the novelist and poet in the position of the ancient Hebrew prophets. They are themselves quite convinced that this is their role and behave accordingly. This is an "image of modern man" and I think it is most often a false one. How many of the more famous examples of the outcast and Jeremiah in literary history have actually been rejected and rejectors of society? Was Poe? Indeed, he was not. He was so conventional a man of his time that most of his attitudes seem ridiculous to us today. Was Baudelaire? He was a typical young Frenchman about town. He was

sensitive, unhappy and poor but he was far from a pariah. So it goes, down to our own Henry Miller, whose life is as conventional as could be imagined.

Someone once said of Lawrence Lipton, the publicity man for the Beatniks, that his much touted "voluntary poverty" consisted in not getting a third TV set for the bathroom. Colin Wilson, the boy who wrote "The Outsider," used the very considerable revenue from that book to buy a nice middle class home in Cornwall and bring down his father and mother and sister and wife and set up a quiet comfortable and respectable life for the family. The neighbors never think of him as anything but one of themselves, only more successful.

Yet still, the conflict is there. The poet Richard Eberhart was here recently, reading at colleges around the Bay and at the Poetry Center. He looks like a middle-aged businessman. He acts and talks like a middle-aged businessmen. So he was, and a successful one too, until Dartmouth offered him a lot more money and a lot easier life teaching poetry to the young. Yet, he is probably the best poet of my generation, a mystic, and a subverter of the established order in his poetry if not in his life. The two departments of his life are so far apart that he hardly recognizes himself in one when he is in the other. He doesn't suffer from conflict because he has divided himself into two entirely separate halves.

Is this a condition peculiar to poets? I think not. Almost everybody has a secret self—his real self—that he feels nobody else really ever knows. Almost everybody lives a private life, his "own" life, which may consist of nothing but the vaguest dreams and reveries, and a public life. Poets are special in that they know how to show this private life forth, how to write things that bolster it up in others.

Poetry gives people confidence in their own inner integrity. If this is so, what is wrong with the world we live in that the poet should characteristically feel always at cross purposes with it? The success of a civilization can be measured by the degree to which inner vision and outer reality match. For over two hundred years there has been a widespread belief that, for modern man, they could not be matched at all. Of course, they never can be completely, except in societies like those of the ants and bees.

But I think today we stand on the verge of new possibilities of healing what philosophers of history have called our "schism of the soul" and our "failure of nerve." The human race has in its hands today the possibility of a new unity of spirit. It had jolly well better take advantage of it, or it will blow itself to smithereens.

Kenneth Rexroth

Gallus Snappers and Jim Crow Negroes

Everywhere I have gone in the South I have met with deep concern, with a real desire to face the ultimate issues of this conflict, and with realization that the impending disappearance of Jim Crow will liberate the South morally and economically.

Every class seems to know that in the final analysis, this is a temporary, actually unreal, problem, and that once it has been got out of the way, the South will be free to come to grips with its many, truly major, problems—problems of reconstruction in the best sense—of both men and the land. Every class, that is, except two—the demagogues with whom it is impossible to talk sense at all, and their diminishing band of followers. Soon they will be left only with the ducktails, the mobs that any rascal could stir up anywhere in the world out of any poolhall or low bar. Time is wasted talking to them. They have no program. It is impossible to get them to focus their attention on anything but the most immediate situation. They respond with the most senseless clichés, a large portion of them slogans of the old southern sex fear of the Negro.

The Boers in South Africa at least have a program, however awful its consequences may turn out to be. The old style gallus snapping demagogue has nothing but rant. He is fighting a battle he knows he can't win, except for the shortest period of time. He hopes, however, that in that short period of time he can "get his." This, of course, is not politics, but a kind of moral looting of the body politic.

I do not like to have to say what I am going to say next. There is another class, or rather small caste, in the South, who have a vested interest in things as they are, or rather, used to be. They who cling to their position, even though they know the law of diminishing returns is catching up with them inexorably. These are the majority, but let me hasten to add, just a bare majority—maybe even secretly not even that—of Negro college professors in the politically captive Negro colleges.

In the face of a world upsurge of unbelievable power and spiritual depth, they persist, a little band of petty, arrogant, and frightened men. These are the only people in all the South who have been literally afraid of me and who have refused to talk or who have given answers, if anything, less straight and more senseless, than the tub thumping white demagogues. They are the only class which has not treated me as an equal, man to man. Even the gallus snappers are crafty enough to do that. Although I have always understood it intellectually, at last I know by experience, in my bones and innards, as a Negro knows, why the words "Uncle Tom" and "Booker T." are terms of contempt. Acquiring this knowledge has not been a pleasant experience.

I talked to the so-called "vice lord" of Negro New Orleans. He is a man of great dignity, intelligence and genuine kindness, even human decency if you will. A person less like a Harlem numbers king would be hard to imagine. He is deliberately liquidating what was once a very profitable empire. He said, "I'm getting out as fast as I can take care of the people who work for me. I'm putting my money in things that will help build up the community, construction companies, building and loan associations, insurance, things like that. Once the only thing a Negro could do with his money was dice or women or lottery. Those days are going fast. At least I always gave the player a break. We paid 33½ per cent, which is more than you could say for Harlem—come to think of it, it's more than you could say for Vegas. Those are the old days. I've got better things to do with my money, and they've got better things to do with theirs."

A Negro warehouseman, who worked for the Government at standard wages, but who lived in the French Quarter in a cramped

and moldy slum, said, "I don't care about their social equality. I don't want to go to their hotels or live in a fashionable neighborhood. They can keep their women, they don't interest me. I just want my sons to know that when they use a drinking fountain, they haven't dirtied it so 'ofays' can't use it. I've got money enough to help my kids through school if they work, too. I want them to get a chance at a good life for themselves. We get along fine with all our white neighbors. It's just when they get together and some crooked politician stirs them up that they make trouble. We can all get along fine in New Orleans if the crooks just let us alone."

I said, "Mr. Hall, you've worked for the Government all over the place. You've worked in Hawaii, where certainly there is more racial equality than anywhere else under the American flag. Why did you come back to this place? I wouldn't if I'd been you."

He replied, "Why, this is my home. I was born in the house across the street. When I came back we lived there until they put a historical marker on it. Then the landlord moved us out and remodeled everything, and white people moved in. Now it's what they call studios. But they couldn't shake us. We moved just across the street. It's my home and I want to make it a better place for my family, not somebody else's home, some place away off somewhere."

One of the leading Negro professors said, "I'd love to talk to you, Mr. Rexroth, and share your thinking on this subject. I am sure you are doing a great deal of good. But I have a very tight schedule. I will turn you over to my secretary and she will do her best to work something out. Thank you very much for asking me. I am very flattered."

Thank you very much, doctor, you are most co-operative. The secretary couldn't work anything out, but over the phone, sitting in front of him, using the subtlest inflections of her voice, she managed to convey her sorrow and contempt.

Who am I to cast the first stone? These men accepted a compromise. They thought they were doing the best they could for their people under the circumstances. Maybe they were. But behind compromises lie, so often, what I was talking about recently in a column on Hamlet—the hidden working of that tragic flaw, that someday undoes all.

Who can say, violence, even bloodshed on the scale of "Hamlet" might break out some place in the South at any moment. But the real tragedies will be acted out at those pitiful mahogany desks in those pathetic offices, and in the privacy of those cheap columned or split level "upper middle class" homes.

Kenneth Rexroth

A Hopeful Journey Through the South

As I traveled through the South, talking to all manner of people, I had one serious problem. I have not been able to find a single example of an intelligent, articulate person who refuses, at least in private conversation, to accept the fact of fairly immediate abolition of Jim Crow and the establishment of a workable structure of legal, but of course, purely legal, racial equality.

With very few exceptions, people have prepared themselves to go into this with all the good will they can muster. Of course, there is a century's old accumulation of bitterness on one side and a certain fear of the first few months or years of adjustment on the other. Nobody expects social equality for a long time. Most intelligent white Southerners know that after years of educational and economic equality, social equality is bound to come. Negroes, of course, are not, at this stage of the game, concerned with social equality at all. What they want is simply full American citizenship.

Both sides know that at first this will make little observable difference. It will make enormous difference in the heart, which is

the same color on both sides. The White South will lose its guilty conscience. The black South will gain new pride and hope. Maybe all this is better, in spite of manifest difficulties ahead which everybody recognizes, than the smug self-satisfaction of an "enlightened" Northern city like San Francisco, where we still have a long way to go to reach even ordinary equality of opportunity, let alone free social equality. At least here a large number of people know they are face to face with the fundamental social moral problem of our time and only hope and pray they can measure up to it.

I have talked to Negro mechanics, warehousemen, janitors, to the gambling boss of Negro New Orleans, to white college professors from old Southern families, to college students, to carpenters. Every newspaperman or woman who has interviewed me on this lecture trip, I've interviewed right back. I was at the first Louisiana sit-in with a girl from the local paper who had interviewed me that morning. She was typical, full of dying prejudices, misinformation and superstitious fears. But she knew it. She was trying to change. Well, the sit-in did a good job of changing her. It was terrific. A group of gentle, well bred, sweet faced kids from Southern University filed in, hand in hand, fellows and girls in couples and sat down quietly. Their faces were transfused with quiet, innocent dedication. They looked like the choir coming into a fine Negro church. They weren't served. They sat quietly, talking together. Nobody, spectators or participants, raised his voice. In fact, the bystanders did not even stare rudely. When the police came, the youngsters spoke softly and politely and once again, fellows and girls hand in hand, they filed out, singing a hymn, and got in the paddy wagon.

The newspaper girl was shaken to her shoes. Possibly it was the first time in her life that she had come face to face with one of the great moral issues of being a human being. She came to the faculty party for me at Louisiana State that night. Her flesh was still shaking and she couldn't stop talking. She had come up against one of the big things in life and she was going to be always a little different afterwards. After all, how many of us do face life in these terms and how often? Mostly, life just goes on. Lucky for us we are not often called upon to be all out moral human beings. There was nothing wrong with this girl's response and she had not been prepared by past training to make it.

We forget that Ghandi did more than free India. He gave the British Commonwealth an awakened conscience. Not everywhere, not, alas in South Africa, and not all at once and to everybody, but in the long run, the decisive people were affected. Today it is an inspiring thing to read in an editorial in a small town Carolina

newspaper, the last line of a sane and sad evaluation of the situation in South Africa, a quotation from Alan Paton, "Let us not, in our pride, think there is any consolation for us in South Africa." Captivity has been taken captive, and by little handfuls of modest, friendly school children.

I talked with a young man from an old aristocratic family with a county named after them in Georgia, who teaches at a State university. He said the old chestnuts about the mammy who raised him and the faithful retainers whom everybody loved and the drunken gardener who his uncle, a judge, had to get out of jail every second weekend. All the old stuff that they say in filibusters. But he said it with a new meaning, a sense of a new kind of responsibility facing him and his family in a new pattern of social relationships. And he meant every word of it.

In the world of 1960, and all over the world, if we don't learn to live together as full human beings pretty quickly, we are going to have to get ready to die together pretty quickly. Not so long ago I despaired of the future, I thought we were incapable of learning. In the last few years it has seemed to me a new feeling of mutual humanity, a new wisdom, is slowly seeping into the stubborn heads of quite ordinary people everywhere. It is a fine thing to watch the tears streaming down the face of a piney woods housewife out on a shopping tour and brought suddenly face to face with dignity, courage, and total lack of hatred.

We have heard plenty about the violence and antagonism in American life. From others we have heard about America as a glorious Republic. Maybe now we are witnessing something new—the emergence of America—and the first emergence right in our most troubled part of the country—of America as, in the words of that famous painting by a naive Quaker painter so long ago, America, a Peaceable Kingdom.

Editor's Note: The Carolina Quarterly is grateful to the San Francisco Examiner for permitting the reprinting of these three articles. Certain revisions have been made for The Carolina Quarterly.

3 Sit-ins Agin

Out 'n Out S—its

1. *S. O'Hara Digs Hiztry*

couth
Sooth

(befo de Wa)

no
Ocacay
Olacay!

onay itshay?
Ofay
Lady

2. *The Interstate Pomegranate* (for Igal Roodenko and Bayard Rustin, Class of 1947)

Kora
in Hell;
C.O.R.E.
in Chapel
Hill

the Lady takes a back seat
for six months;

my friends refused a back seat.
got thirty days once

3. *The Patagonian Declaration of Independence*

o

foot that can't be Beat
carry me back
to the Big-Foot Country.
to the cool-yclept
Coltrane Country

go

catch a catarrhed eel
in the know, if he's
hollow let him

be

cause when ah die
there'll be a Tah-Heel

bourne

—Jonathan Williams

For Rexroth

Inside, the beer and jazz
roll, the boys talk about
the rats at the frats
and the girls squeeze
hearty buttocks to the floor.
their ears listen
for any lonely bed.
And some of us are caught
in these uneven terms :
between our small, stagnant
questions asked at
the transient poet
come for the great weekend
far from the slow rains
touching the frog ponds
to break someday the
symmetrical night where too,
the mind is still as a freeze.

—Richard Rickert

On Hearing Richard Eberhart

We have too long stalked
over such raging seacoasts
barnstorming, or if beachcombing,
saving nothing whatever, while
talking dreams into their thunders,
salts, smells . or sometimes
allegories . anagoges
of natural shape, the osprey's
wings drenched in spumes
like hyssop, fighting off
in feathers and lungs
the tubercular flesh
once toughened
to athletic strength,
the anxious eyes
and uncertain glides stiffened
and yet we sink, unrecognized,
stripped
of pathos, our blunt advice
and roars twisted, thinned out
in shivering tidal pools.
So now, like hoarse children,
we will sit back on the shaling rocks
and watch the winds
sweep, order falling over
the unmolested kelp, the Dungenese crab
submerged to his escaping cage.

—Richard Rickert

Throwing The Apple

(Based on a Painting by D. H. Lawrence)

Adam and Eve sat in their garden.
The day was bright and fair, but Jehovah
Was looking over the garden as warden.
Would human softness ever harden?

Eve took a bite of the apple,
Concerned with the bright sun's dapple
As shadows emerged in the woodland.
Adam's concern was to grasp, to grapple.

We then see Adam, unaccountably
Stand up dark and fierce and shrill.
He aimed the apple at Jehovah
And flung it at him with all his will.

—Richard Eberhart

Richard Eberhart

On Throwing The Apple

What are the feelings and ideas you have from this poem? It is the only one, I think, I ever wrote from looking directly at a painting.

Recently while reading an art magazine at Yaddo I was struck by the accidental encounter of a painting by D. H. Lawrence. This was a color reproduction of the following scene. Adam and Eve have partaken of the fruit of knowledge. They are standing in the foreground with their naked backs to the viewer. There is a tree with a snake coiled around it as I recall. But the astounding thing is yet to come. It is this dramatic element which most arrested me originally. In the background of the picture is a large figure who is Jehovah. He is a Blake-like huge god, quite in the form of a bearded old man, but god-like nevertheless. Adam has thrown the apple in a bee-line directly at Jehovah and it has just hit him in the chest. This is the revolutionary, totally human predicament and story of this picture by D. H. Lawrence. I dwell on the meaning-content rather than on the style as painting as I am not equipped to evaluate the latter except that as I recall there were characteristic reds in the painting which were pleasing.

I was a student at Cambridge. We all read Lawrence, but at that time as an established, but growing author. A year before, on

a Cambridge vacation on the continent I recall standing in a queue of twenty persons eagerly waiting to get a read at a page of Lawrence's "Lady Chatterley's Lover," which had just appeared, of course then unexpurgated. This book was chained to a post in a bookstore in Florence. Each excited person came up to his turn, read a few pages, and gave way to the next aspirant.

It was a Lawrence who was still producing and going strong who had his painting exhibition in London. I recall two rooms, both full of talking, smoking people. In those days one was self-contained and there was a certain air of superiority which seemed to be the due of Cambridge and Oxford men. I came into these rooms with my friend and was aware of red as the principal color in the paintings, which were mostly small, and of circular or womb-like objects as the principal motif. We were surprised but in no way to be bowled over or revolutionized. We had a somewhat haughty and jaunty air, as I recall.

There in the far room was D. H. Lawrence, red beard and flapping clothes, gesticulating and talking animatedly to admirers. One could have easily been introduced to him and had a chat, but back in that early time there was a restraint and where there was no direct cause to talk with someone one would not think of doing it for effect. I guess the psychological truth is that I was much more interested in myself than in D. H. Lawrence.

It was by the same token that I never walked five hundred feet, from St. John's College next door to Trinity to listen to A. E. Housman conduct a class, which could as easily have been accomplished. Later, I regretted never having laid eyes on Housman and after the death of Lawrence I regretted not having had a word with him on the occasion of his one painting exhibition.

As to the poem itself, I am indebted to Yaddo for it as for poems in my published works conceived and written there. It brings forcibly to the mind that one of man's most manlike acts is protest. If he cannot protest, if he has not the power at least to protest, then he has lost his will and is a dupe to superior forces.

This reminds me to tell you that I was a young man once who saw Lawrence plain, but did not deign to go up and speak to him. Let me explain. There was a period in Lawrence's life when he bent his febrile energies to painting, thinking that by plastic method he might get to the heart of his psychic matter. Finally an exhibition of these paintings was held in London, in 1929.

I liked the forceful throw of Adam in the painting, the fact that he dared hit Jehovah in the chest, as this appears to the eyes

as a symbol of all the protests man can ever make against conditions quite beyond him to change and maybe beyond him to improve. You do not have to explicate every idea when looking at the picture or when hearing the poem. You may recognize that we did not come into the world of our own choosing; that the world is an old, harsh and sometimes lovely place; that man is not the master or maker of God but that God is the master of man; that God for reasons which have daunted the greatest thinkers from the ancient Chinese through the Greeks to ourselves, put evil into the world and gave man choice. But why He did this is a mystery still. And all the inescapable troubles, evils, sins of the world, pain and suffering, accident and disease, have sprung from the eating of the apple of knowledge by Adam and Eve in the Garden. It was Eve who offered it to Adam, but no matter, they are both involved.

Why I like the painting and why I like the poem is that, as a primitive and basic act, it shows man as capable of protesting the imperfections of his condition. This is what I like. Leave it as simply as that, without ramifications, if you like. I am not saying that man or Adam would rather not have been born. I am not saying that man or Adam think that they have made God in their own image, that there is no God outside or beyond man. I am not saying that man or Adam is so arrogant as to think he could do a better job of creating life. I say, to conclude, that man is endlessly aware of his fallen condition, of his mortality, of his imperfection and that when he is deeply aware of the meaning and consequences of the apple he is capable of throwing it with a smashing blow back at the chest of Jehovah.



The Carolina Quarterly is grateful to Art News for permission to reprint Richard Eberhart's poem "Throwing the Apple."

I Pledge Allegiance

There were Princes and Presidents in our family,
 mother told me;
and I believed,
 this being America
 and all.
Solemn bunny bright eyed at her knee,
burning in baptism of ancestry,
I pictured "south,"
 her seedland,
an immediately out of reach box of goodies,
fancy free of the fact that
she had left it.
I never thought about them
 much.
The Prince, I mean.
Northbound to democracy,
 fraternity, equality,
his blue-blood (mine) I dismissed for Grimm
 wherein, anyway,
such silver-salt of birth
 flashed forth
 more real than
all the talk
 — no showing —
 of how
on her father's side
my great grandpa was prince.

Oppositely,

Mr. President

was on her mother's side.

She said it; but it
was not true.

In appetite of roots

I checked;

learning

how in the human need for kin

hand-me-down talk

had ladder-rung fish with fowl

to approach identity.

Yet,

this scholarship which downed

an old wife's tale

raised up her true forbear;

and his;

blood stems of me.

All windmills in my mind.

In these tight times when

some of us

have as feed the sour grapes

of citizenship;

while others report themselves "American"

only after (*country of your choice*)

I turn

in the basement of my loyalty

search lighting these great grand men who

in the natural history of America

equalized themselves upon

my family tree.

One

— that black, un-

common man

was a late arrival in our fields,

and

I feel sure

none too happy with his royal loss of right

and privilege.

Yet, his labor

made cotton darkly king;

no small accomplishment

considering how

in our day

we have seen

kingships broken down more

than raised.

The other
 the pink fruit
 of an old inhabitancy
 which
 since his grandpa stood General under
 Ol Hickory
 at the battle of New Orleans
 makes me
 I think
 pioneer. Or,
 certainly
 close to it since several cities
 by their name
 celebrate
 my English-German-Scotch-Irish
 Jewish integrity.
 One, immigrant;
 one native-born;
 I, too, could second class this land. Except
 I don't.
 For
 in hyperbole of truth
 I am America:
 it golden Rule made visible;
 its manifest of justice and liberty.
 Self-consciously,
 I say who sees himself my foe
 looks most upon
 my country's enemy.

—G. C. Oden

Ralph Dennis

Walking Boy

A Radio Play

MUSIC: *THE SLOW PICKING OF A GUITAR. OUT.*

NARRATOR: It's not really much of a town. There's a pickle cannery and a loading shed placed right in the center of about three square miles of the best cucumber-growing country in the world. Except during the canning season there's no labor problem. In the off-season there are unemployment benefits for the regular help. And most of them line up for it. But like I said, during the pickle season there's not enough labor. It used to be a real problem until two or three men thought of taking trucks into Mississippi and recruiting Negro labor, not just for the cucumber season but for a long sweep that starts in Maryland and works down as far as Florida. Hell, where else can you get labor for what amounts to twenty-five cents an hour?

SOUND: A SPOON BEAT AGAINST THE BOTTOM OF A PAN.

NARRATOR: That's the call to dinner. Usually a half hour in the shade. If they're lucky there might even be a little homebrew.

1st WOMAN: (GROANING.) Lawd, I can't straighten out. I got a cramp in my back. (GRUNTS) There! I thought I might have to crawl to that shade tree.

2nd WOMAN: You getting old, that's all. It comes up on you, you don't even know it. (LAUGHS)

SOUND: WALKING THROUGH SAND. LAUGHTER, HUB-BUB IN THE DISTANCE.

ABRA: (IN THE DISTANCE.) A-Zel! A-Zel! Come to eat!

SOUND: LOUDER WALKING THROUGH SAND.

ABRA: Have you seen Azel anywhere?

1st WOMAN: I seen him halfway 'cross the field goin' slow. He said his side hurt somethin' awful.

SOUND: RUNNING. THE SLAP OF SHOES.

1st WOMAN: (IN THE DISTANCE) He said you don't worry.

ABRA: (BREATHING HARD, FRIGHTENED) Lord, Lord (CALLS) A-Zel!

NARRATOR: Azel is curled up between the rows, with the half-filled cotton sack stretched out behind him. A dull pain that began during the early morning has grown steadily worse. Now his face is in the sand, there is sand in his mouth, and he cannot stand up.

AZEL: (WEAKLY) Here, Abra. I'm here.

SOUND: RUNNING. SHE FALLS TO HER KNEES BESIDE HIM.

ABRA: (TRYING TO CONTROL HER BREATHING) You didn't come to dinner and I worried.

AZEL: I got this pain in my side. I never felt so much pain.

ABRA: Come to the shade. It's the sun that's got you.

AZEL: I can't move.

ABRA: I'll help you. Let me pull you up.

AZEL: No. Don't. It hurts so much.

ABRA: (FRIGHTENED) I'll call Joe Billy . . .

AZEL: Don't call nobody. Just bring me a drink of cold water. That'll do me fine.

ABRA: I'll go see the overseer and . . .

AZEL: (FIRMLY) Just bring me that water. I think I'll be better after I rest some. (HARSHLY) Do what I say.

MUSIC: THE SLOW PICKING OF A GUITAR. OUT.

NARRATOR: But an hour later he's not any better. Oh, he tries hard enough. Fear can force the body into super-

human effort, as people say that love can. But that's something else. (PAUSE) Azel's superhuman effort isn't enough to please the talley-man who's usually a hard man to keep happy anyway. He scowls down at his book and leaves the chute and truck long enough to find the overseer.

SOUND: HEAVY BOOTS COMING CLOSER AND CLOSER. STOP.

OVERSEER: (ROUGHLY) Boy. Azel. You soldiering on me?

AZEL: No, sir. I got this hurt in my side.

OVERSEER: You got too much "scrapiron" in your gut.

AZEL: Mr. Overseer, I can't move.

OVERSEER: Get up, nigger boy.

AZEL: I can't.

OVERSEER: If I kick you in the butt a few times I think you'll move like I say.

AZEL: Don't do that, Mr. Overseer.

OVERSEER: (MAD) You telling me what to do? I don't take that from no nigger boy.

AZEL: (WEAKLY) Please. I got this pain . . .

SOUND: A KICK. AND THEN ANOTHER. FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY A TRUCK STARTING.

OVERSEER: Take him over to the cannery and see if you can get him a ride to the Charity Hospital. Maybe there is something wrong with him. I like to have broke a toe on his butt and he didn't move.

ABRA: I'll come to see you tomorrow. If not then, then on Sunday.

SOUND: LOUDER TRUCK ENGINE.

ABRA: (SHOUTING) You do everything they tell you to . . .

SOUND: TRUCK ENGINE OUT.

MUSIC: SLOW PICKING OF GUITAR.

NARRATOR: He stayed in the hospital for better than a month getting over a ruptured appendix. Abra didn't come to see him. Most of the month he didn't miss her. He had all those tubes down his nose, and there was always the pain. At the end of a month he was better and he worried some about her. All he could think of was seeing her. He thumbed a ride to the pickle cannery and walked from there across the fields. Even then he didn't have any hope. He saw all the brown, rotting cucumber vines in the field all around him. Still, he went on, leaving the empty

fields behind, going on to the tar-paper shack where they'd lived.

SOUND: A DOOR SQUEAKING. SLOW STEPS ACROSS THE FLOOR.

NARRATOR: The room was dusty as if it hadn't been used in two or three weeks. There was only one sign that anyone had ever lived there: he found his church shoes on the bare mattress where he and Abra had slept.

OLD MAN: (CALLING OUTSIDE) Hey, is there somebody in there?

SOUND: STEPS ACROSS THE FLOOR. THE DOOR OPENING.

AZEL: Yes. I'm here.

OLD MAN: Who're you? I don't remember you.

AZEL: I used to work here. Then I was in the hospital.

OLD MAN: You must be one of that truckload.

AZEL: I was looking for them.

OLD MAN: They left two weeks last Wednesday.

AZEL: Did they say where they go next? I got a wife with them.

OLD MAN: That sure is bad.

AZEL: Did they say where they'd go next?

OLD MAN: I don't rightly remember. I heard one of them say something about Hunnington, but then somebody said something about Reidsville. I can't rightly say.

AZEL: I'd better go.

OLD MAN: That sure is a good pair of shoes you got hanging over your shoulder. I seen 'em on the bed but they wasn't my size.

AZEL: My Sunday shoes.

SOUND: CARS PASSING. WALKING.

MUSIC: SLOW PICKING OF A GUITAR.

1st MAN: Naw, they wasn't over this way. It wouldn't have done them any good. We got no need for any workers. We got people—people goin' hungry without work as it is . . . (Fades out)

2nd MAN: Sure, they stayed about a week. They could have stayed longer if they'd got here sooner, but most of the crop was already in. There was a whole truckload of 'em, about twenty altogether. There was about six or eight women with 'em, but I couldn't say that I noticed any certain one. All these women look alike to me. No offense meant. (FADES OUT)

3rd MAN: ... a real light-skinned girl? Yeah, she was with 'em.
 AZEL: I guess I'd better go on.
 3rd MAN: If you're not in any all-fired hurry you might stay on the place a few days. I've got a few chores that takes more than one man to do.
 AZEL: I'd be obliged for some work.
 3rd MAN: Couldn't pay you much. There'd be a place to stay and food and maybe a couple of dollars when you get ready to go.
 AZEL: I'm obliged. I'm getting kind of honed down from walking.
 3rd MAN: If we get a snap of cold weather I've got a couple of hogs I'd like to get dressed out.
 SOUND: HOGS SQUEALING. FADE OUT. MONEY CLINKING ON MONEY.
 3rd MAN: One-seventy-five, two dollars. And I'll just throw in another half dollar because you've been good help.
 AZEL: I've liked working here.
 3rd MAN: You could stay around a while longer if you wanted to. I could use a good man.
 AZEL: I got to be going if I'm ever going to catch up.
 3rd MAN: If I was you I guess I'd be doing the same thing. (CHUCKLES) That is, if I wasn't running away from my wife.
 WOMAN: (CALLING FROM A DISTANCE) Frank, how long are you going to stand there talking with supper on the table?
 3rd MAN: (CALLING) Just a minute longer. (TO AZEL) You'd be better to start out in the morning. You come get some supper and you're welcome to sleep the night.
 SOUND: THUNDER. CARS PASSING. THUNDER AND THEN RAIN. CARS FADE OUT. THEN THE HARSH BARKING OF A DOG.
 AZEL: Easy, dog, easy. I ain't going to hurt you.
 SOUND: SHOES GOING UP STEPS. KNOCKING ON A DOOR. THE DOG'S BARK CHANGES TO A GROWL.
 AZEL: Hush, dog, before I get me a stick.
 CLARA: (CALLING THROUGH DOOR) Who's there? Is there somebody out there?
 AZEL: Azel's out here.
 CLARA: I don't know anybody named Azel.
 AZEL: No, ma'am, you don't know me.

CLARA: Then get off my porch.
 AZEL: I can't. I lost my way. I'm soaked wet and that dog is about to bite off my leg.
 CLARA: Let him. (PAUSE) No, wait'll I get my flashlight.
 SOUND: DOOR OPENS A CRACK.
 CLARA: You don't look mean. You didn't come here for trouble, did you?
 AZEL: No, ma'am, I'm cold and wet and hungry. I don't have any trouble left in me.
 SOUND: THE DOOR OPENS THE REST OF THE WAY.
 CLARA: (ANGRILY) Come on in then. You're letting all that rain in the house.
 SOUND: DOOR SLAMS. RAIN OUT.
 CLARA: Sit down. I think there's some coffee on the stove. You look like you could use a cup.
 AZEL: I sure could. It's getting cold out.
 CLARA: You mean you been walking around in this kind of weather without a coat.
 AZEL: When I started out it wasn't cold and then I didn't have any way to get a coat.
 CLARA: If you've been walking around in this, maybe I can find a drop or two of white whiskey. Are you a drinking man?
 AZEL: I don't hold against it altogether.
 CLARA: (CHUCKLING) I might even have a slice or two of cold meat in the icebox.
 SOUND: OPENING AND CLOSING OF THE ICEBOX DOOR. PLATE AGAINST THE TABLE TOP.
 CLARA: Sit down. Don't just stand there staring at me.
 AZEL: It's kind of you.
 CLARA: You eat while I hunt that white whiskey.
 SOUND: WALKING OUT OF THE ROOM.
 AZEL: (CALLING AFTER HER) This is a nice place you've got.
 SOUND: PULLING OUT ONE DRAWER AND THEN ANOTHER ONE.
 CLARA: It does alright. Here it is. It looks like there's a drop for me too.
 SOUND: WALKING BACK INTO THE ROOM.
 CLARA: I usually put it in my coffee. Is that alright with you?
 AZEL: Any way is fine with me.
 CLARA: You're an easy man to please.

AZEL: (AFTER SWALLOWING) That's good white whiskey. (GULPING) Where's your husband? Is he already gone to bed?

CLARA: I'm a widow. Have been for a year. (SIPS)

AZEL: You're pretty young and ripe-looking for a widow. I wouldn't have thought that you were one.

CLARA: (DEFENSIVELY) I thought you said you didn't want any trouble.

AZEL: (MEEKLY) Am I making trouble?

CLARA: (SIGHS) I guess not. (LAUGHS HUSKILY) I'm just not used to men saying nice things to me. It makes me feel sort of high, like I've got the tiniest kind of a buzz.

AZEL: You've been holding that cup up to your mouth for a long time, ma'am.

CLARA: Call me Clara. Calling me ma'am makes me feel old.

AZEL: And that's one thing you're not.

SOUND: CHAIR PUSHED AWAY FROM THE TABLE.

AZEL: Where're you going?

CLARA: You know, I think I got another bottle of white whiskey here somewhere.

MUSIC: SLOW PICKING OF GUITAR, THEN FASTER AND FASTER.

SOUND: FORK AGAINST A PLATE.

AZEL: That's the first breakfast like that since I left Mississippi and most of them weren't that good.

CLARA: You'd be good off here if you'd stay. A woman can't run a place this size all by herself.

AZEL: I've told you why I've got to go. I've lost so much time already.

CLARA: Stay a day or two more. I've got some hogs I want killed. A woman can't be expected to kill hogs.

SOUND: CHAIR PUSHED BACK.

AZEL: Clara, I've killed so many hogs lately that I get to feel that they're friends of mine. I can't look a hog in the eye without crying. (PAUSE, THEN SERIOUSLY) I've got to go.

CLARA: This wife you're looking for, is she worth all this hunting around?

AZEL: I think she is. (PAUSE) The truth might be that she ain't any better than you are.

CLARA: (WARMLY) Then don't leave.

AZEL: I got to.

CLARA: Before you go come back to my room. I've got a dollar there that I'll let you have.

AZEL: I've got a dollar. I thank you though.

CLARA: (HISSING) Get out, then, get out. I wish you'd never come here in the first place.

SOUND: CARS PASSING. WALKING.

MUSIC: MUFFLED PICKING OF GUITAR. OUT.

DESK SAR.: Book him. If he's in jail maybe hubcaps'll be safer around town. Boy, how much whiskey-money did you make?

BOY: None. I didn't do anything.

DESK SAR.: Sure, you didn't.

BOY: I swear I didn't.

DESK. SAR.: Joe, put him in the last cell back, the ones with the big rats in it.

SOUND: CELL DOOR CLOSING. FRONT DOOR OPENS. WALKING UP TO DESK.

DESK SAR.: Yeah, what do you want, boy?

AZEL: I want to turn myself in.

DESK SAR.: Do what?

AZEL: Turn myself in.

DESK SAR.: For what?

AZEL: For being hungry and having no place to stay.

DESK SAR.: (LAUGHS. CALLS OUT) Hey Joe, come out here a minute. I got something I want you to hear.

SOUND: CELL DOOR SLAMMING. WALKING.

JOE: Hear what?

DESK SAR.: Tell him what you told me.

AZEL: I want to turn myself in.

DESK SAR.: Tell him why.

AZEL: Because I'm hungry and I . . .

BOTH POLICEMEN LAUGH.

DESK SAR. I don't know whether I can lock you up for that or not. Now if you . . .

SOUND: TELEPHONE RINGS.

DESK SAR.: Hello. Yeah, this is the desk sergeant. (PAUSE) Yes, Mr. Callahan, I've got one of your boys here, for stealing hubcaps. (PAUSE) Not unless you want to put up bail. (PAUSE) Yes, I know, but I can't do anything for you. You'll have to find another dishwasher. (LAUGHS) Let me tell you what just happened. This boy walked right in and told me he turned himself in because he was hungry. (PAUSE)

Yes, that's right. (LAUGHS) Have you ever heard anything to beat that? (LAUGHS) I don't know. I'll ask him. (TO AZEL) Boy, you want a job?

AZEL: I'd appreciate one.

DESK SAR.: (INTO PHONE) It looks like you've got yourself a new dishwasher. (PAUSE) Yeah, he looks like he can work. He's a healthy-looking country boy with two pairs of shoes. (PAUSE) I don't know what that has to do with anything, but he's got one pair on and the other pair slung over his shoulder. (LAUGHS)

MUSIC: JUKE BOX PLAYING FAST MUSIC.

SOUND: CLATTER OF DISHES. DOOR OPENS.

CALLAHAN: Where's Ajax?

MABEL: Mr. Callahan, he just went out to get some air.

CALLAHAN: I don't pay him to walk all over the back lots. Do I, Mabel?

MABEL: No, sir. (PAUSE) He sure is one nervous man. He can't stand still one minute. Even when he washes dishes his feet move like he's dancing.

CALLAHAN: I ought to give him something to dance about.

SOUND: BACK DOOR SLAMMING. FEET SHUFFLING.

CALLAHAN: So there you are! Where've you been, Ajax?

AZEL: Getting some air, Mr. Callahan.

CALLAHAN: I don't remember saying anything about paying you to walk all over town. Did I, Ajax?

AZEL: No, sir.

CALLAHAN: Then get out on those tables and pick up the dirty dishes.

SOUND: DISHES RATTLING.

MUSIC: FAST JUKE BOX MUSIC.

CALLAHAN: (JOVIALY) Just because it's payday don't think you don't have to work tomorrow. Don't think you have to spend it all in one place, eh, Ajax? (PAUSE) Here you are Ajax, one week's pay.

AZEL: Thank you.

CALLAHAN: Mabel . . . (STOPS) You want something, Ajax?

AZEL: I want two of them nickle cigars.

CALLAHAN: Don't smoke 'em both in the same place. Ha-Ha.

MUSIC: PICKING OF GUITAR. OUT.

SOUND: OPENING OF BEER CAN. HISS.

CLYDE: Drink up, Ajax. You ain't got the start of a buzz yet.

AZEL: Clyde, my name's Azel.

CLYDE: Yeah, but Callahan . . .
 AZEL: My name's Azel.
 CLYDE: Okay, okay, don't get your hair all kinked up. What I was saying was that I'm supposed to meet three guys and we're getting a couple of jars of white whiskey.
 AZEL: I just want one beer to go with my cigar.
 CLYDE: And afterwards we take in this private dance in Columbia.
 AZEL: I don't have the money. I'm leaving town in a day or two.
 CLYDE: Hell, it won't cost more than a dollar.
 AZEL: (SWALLOWS) Can't spare the dollar.
 CLYDE: There'll be some high life "trim" there. Real high life "trim."
 AZEL: I don't need any trim.
 CLYDE: Don't lie to me. Boy, I know better. There's one I'll say the fine word to for you.
 AZEL: I'm leaving Monday.
 CLYDE: BULL. You can spare a dollar. That's all it'll cost.
 AZEL: Okay, I'll go. Now how about getting off my back so I can drink my beer?
 SOUND: SHRILL, DRUNKEN WOMEN'S LAUGHTER. LOUD TALKING. ICE RATTLING IN GLASSES. FADES INTO BACKGROUND.
 MUSIC: WILD LOUD MUSIC. FADES INTO BACKGROUND.
 CLYDE: Roll, man, you're holding up the game.
 SOUND: DICE THROWN AGAINST A WALL.
 CLYDE: Five. Five's the point. Roll again, Ajax.
 AZEL: (SQUEAKING THE DICE IN HIS HAND) Bus ticket to Florida. No more walking. Bus ticket to Florida.
 1st MAN: Roll man, don't rub the spots off.
 CLYDE: Roll, Ajax.
 AZEL: (SOFTLY) Bus ticket . . . UGH!
 SOUND: DICE THROWN AGAINST THE WALL.
 CLYDE: Craped out.
 2nd MAN: Ugly seven!
 CLYDE: (LAUGHING) Don't leave, man. You're making my bad luck look good.
 AZEL: (IN A CHOKED VOICE) I'm cleaned.
 CLYDE: Stay around. I'll lend you five for seven. Want to keep you in this game, man.

AZEL: I don't want any of your five for seven.
 1st. MAN: Don't go away mad. Have a drink from the fruit jar.
 CLYDE: Then go out and move around some of that "trim."
 AZEL: I don't need any "trim."
 MUSIC: *LOUD FAST MUSIC. OUT.*
 SOUND: *CLATTER OF DISHES. OUT.*
 MABEL: Alright now, Azel, don't stop off for any crap games this time.
 AZEL: I'm leaving right now, Mabel. I've done told Mr. Callahan.
 MABEL: I hope you find her.
 AZEL: I'll try Florida and if she's not there I'll go on back to home.
 MABEL: Good luck.
 AZEL: I think my luck'll change this time.
 MUSIC: *LONGER THAN USUAL BRIDGE OF GUITAR MUSIC.*
 OLD MAN: Have a drink of buttermilk.
 AZEL: Thank you. (SWALLOWS, SMACKS HIS LIPS)
 Real good buttermilk.
 OLD MAN: Looks like you walked a right smart piece. You must be a long ways from home.
 AZEL: My house's only ten miles further on. I've been gone a long time. I walked most of the way from Florida.
 OLD MAN: Had a brother once was in Florida. Must have been twenty year ago. He said it was much different.
 AZEL: It wasn't.
 OLD MAN: I heard some folks went out that way about eight months ago. Went in a truck. They didn't have to walk. Hear they come back in a truck too. Hear they all come back rich.
 SOUND: *RUNNING.*
 MUSIC: *FAST PICKING OF GUITAR. OUT.*
 SOUND: *RUNNING. HEAVY BREATHING. SETTling INTO A STEADY WALK.*
 AZEL: When did they get back, ma?
 MA: Most two months ago. Abra said she thought you was dead.
 PA: She came back looking like she swallowed a watermelon. It's a wonder that truck didn't bounce it from under her dress. (LAUGHS)
 MA: Hush, pa.

PA: Hush, yourself. He's a big boy. Must have weighed ten pound. His shoulders' wide as a plow handle.

MA: Don't lie. Tomorrow's Sunday.

AZEL: How long has this man been hanging around her?

PA: Josh? Since she give birth.

MA: (SOOTHINGLY) It wasn't right a young girl like her shouldn't have some company.

PA: I got my shotgun first time I seen him coming. I knowed you wasn't dead.

MA: He didn't either. Josh brought him plug tobacco and me snuff. Pa didn't do anything except make him feel to home.

AZEL: It's getting late. What time do they get back?

PA: An hour. Maybe more.

AZEL: Is my shotgun still here?

MA: Son, don't . . .

PA: (INTERRUPTING) In the closet where it was when you left.

SOUND: CHAIR PUSHED BACK. WALKING. CLOSET OPENING.

MA: (FRIGHTENED) She ain't that kind of girl . . .

PA: Hush, ma.

SOUND: SHOTGUN BROKEN OPEN.

AZEL: (CALMLY) It's been fired and ain't been cleaned.

MA: He loaned it to Josh last week to hunt rabbits with.

PA: I kinda hoped he'd shoot himself with it.

MA: He give us two fat rabbits he shot with it.

PA: Cleaning stuff's in the closet too.

AZEL: You got any birdshot?

PA: You don't want birdshot. You want . . .

AZEL: (LOUDER) I said: have you got any birdshot?

MUSIC: FAST PICKING OF GUITAR. OUT.

SOUND: SQUEAKING OF A ROCKING CHAIR.

MA: I wish you'd think better of it, son. This ain't the kind of thing you'd do.

AZEL: If I thought a year I'd do the same.

SOUND: CLICK OF SHELLS INSERTED INTO SHOTGUN.

AZEL: Go inside, Ma and don't say anything more. They'll be coming through that stretch of woods and I don't want them to hear you.

SOUND: SQUEAKING OF ROCKING CHAIR. STOPS AS THE FULL LAUGHTER OF JOSH AND ABRA IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE. SOUND OF THE BREECH OF THE SHOTGUN BEING CLOSED.

ABRA: (IN THE DISTANCE) That was fun, Josh.
 JOSH: (IN THE DISTANCE) Shore was. We'll do the same tomorrow night.
 ABRA: Not on Sunday. (LAUGHS)
 SOUND: SHOTGUN FIRED. PELLETS RATTLING AGAINST THE UNDERGROWTH.
 JOSH: (YELLING) Don't shoot, Grandpa. This is Josh out here!
 ABRA: And Abra too.
 SOUND: OTHER BARREL FIRED. PELLETS AGAINST THE UNDERGROWTH.
 AZEL: (YELLING BACK) I know who it is. Come out here, Josh, where I can get a clean shot at you.
 ABRA: (SHOUTING) Azel!
 SOUND: SHELLS FALLING ON THE FLOOR. NEW SHELLS INSERTED. BREECH CLOSING.
 JOSH: Azel, you don't understand. Man, I ain't been walking in your garden.
 SOUND: SHOTGUN FIRED.
 ABRA: Azel, he's telling the truth.
 SOUND: SHOTGUN FIRED. FOLLOWED BY RUNNING, UNDERGROWTH SNAPPING.
 ABRA: He's gone, Azel.
 AZEL: Come out before I come in after you.
 ABRA: I'm coming.
 AZEL: Come up to the steps.
 ABRA: (ABOUT TO CRY) Azel . . .
 AZEL: Hush up.
 ABRA: (CRYING) Go ahead, kill me.
 AZEL: Come up on the porch.
 ABRA: I didn't do anything.
 SOUND: ABRA MOUNTING THE STEPS. STOPS.
 AZEL: So you thought I was dead.
 ABRA: Yes, I did. Somebody said you was dead at the hospital.
 SOUND: SOUND OF AZEL HITTING HER. SHE FALLS ONTO FLOOR. SOBBING.
 AZEL: When you get done crying come on in the house.
 SO'JND: DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING BEHIND HIM. ABRA SOBBING.

Sambo

In the hot sun, meeting the toothed tiger
I gave up my umbrella
Conscious that no more sheltered
From the dark rain and bright sun
Could I hide away in color
(It being a faded but definite melon color)
That I must present my black head to darkness
And the whites of my eyes to light
I gave up my umbrella.

Not satisfied, the yellow-toothed tiger
Coaxed my clothing from me
And wore my green vest with brass buttons
Under the shade of the cocoanut palm
Sported my blue trousers under the banana plant
While I surveyed my limbs in silence
Resigned to giving up my vest and pants
But I longed to wrap myself in color
The tiger having coaxed my clothing from me.

Enamoured of my yellow shoes, the tiger
Unlaced them from my feet
Put them on and walked upright on the ground
And I remembered how the soles had squeaked
When they were new and I had dreamed of cities
And it was the hardest part, losing my shoes
In the jungle of the banana plant
For they had brown stitching and smelled faraway
Before the large-toothed tiger had unlaced them.

Relieved that the final day was over
That the loop of angry tigers toothed no longer
Melted under the shade of the cocoanut palm
I gathered up my clothes and put them on
My soul having feasted on tiger-butter.

—Cindy McMichael Egerton

John Bacich

Winner of Tenth Annual Fiction Contest

Confirmation

The ice cream was melting. It covered his dish in soft pink and white hills. He had spooned three half-circles from the side of the cake, another in the frosting, and no more. He couldn't eat any more of it. Sheeney sighed. Without looking up he knew his mother was watching him. If he did look, she would smile or wave her hand or wink at him across the room, would do anything but look worried. He felt more sorry for her than for himself, and the thought tightened his throat. There wasn't anything he could do. He couldn't lose the remembrance of that man, and, while he remembered, he couldn't force a smile; he had tried. There went the player piano. He could hear the thumping of the pedals, and then "Under the Double Eagle" started. That roll was no good. There was the first skip, and the sudden spray of laughter from the corner. They were all having fun. He should be too. Confirmation parties came once in a lifetime; this was his and given in his own home. He and his mother had planned the party and prepared for it. He had sent invitations he, himself had written out. Then he had gone around and asked everyone personally. There were presents on the dining room table. In the side pocket of his coat, there was a wallet, the long, flat one he had asked for; and inside the wallet was a five-dollar bill.

That man, today, had ruined everything.

They had been confirmed, Sheeney and Paul and most of their friends, and some others, even some adults. He remembered the bishop, old and skinny with loose-skinned wrinkles, small fingers, on one of them a large ring slid back and forth. He remembered the feel of the bishop's hand on his head and the heaviness of that ring. As they left the church, they sang "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name," Sheeney's favorite hymn. He had looked for his mother but hadn't found her. Then they stood on the church steps, waiting to have their pictures taken, the new soldiers of Christ. On the sidewalk the parents and relatives formed a large arc behind the photographer. The incense was still in Sheeney's nose, the music of the hymn in his ears. He was next to Paul. The two of them would stand against all the sin of the world. And then that man had broken it, had come from nowhere, had stood in front of them, yelling and screaming at them. Dinky Monahan's father had run out of the crowd and grabbed the man's arms, and Jerry's father had stuck his hand over the man's mouth. Father Boentz had motioned toward the priest house and he and Jerry's and Dinky's father had dragged the man, kicking and pulling and still trying to yell, into the house.

The "Double Eagle" skipped and played too fast to its finish, and the end of the roll came off its hook and flapped wildly. Sheeney looked up and then around the room, glancing past his mother who stood near the kitchen door. It was strange to see so many of his school friends here in his house; they seemed unfamiliar. Only Paul looked the same. Sheeney started toward him. If anyone could make him feel better, it would be Paul. Next to his mother he cared for no one as much as he did for Paul. His friend was always so sure of everything, never wavered. Already he knew that he would be a priest, and Sheeney knew that nothing would stop him. It was the same in small things. If they had to kneel a long time, Sheeney's back would ache and his knees would hurt, and he would sit back against the pew; Paul wouldn't. When they served a Solemn High Mass, Sheeney always gave in to the giggling of another altar boy; Paul never did. There were times, when he was mad at Paul, that he would decide that these things marked a sissy, but most of the time he admired him for it and wished that he could be like him. During the confirmation instructions, Sheeney had made up his mind that he too would be more holy. At first he had worked at it consciously and hard, then he had noticed that it took much less effort. He had begun to feel a wonderful new independence and strength in himself. The feeling had grown steadily until he was beginning to wonder how far it would take him. For

the first time in his life, he thought that he, too, might be a priest. He had been able to see himself at the communion rail, the chalice in his hand.

"It's a nice party, Vincent."

That was Elizabeth Grace. Sheeney could tell. It wasn't necessary for him to turn around, and he nodded without doing so. He didn't like her. He didn't like the paleness of her hair, and the tight plumpness of her skin that was too white and reminded him of the meat of an almond. She was here because he had to be polite. He wondered if his mother were sorry now that she had insisted on the invitation. Whenever he had noticed, Elizabeth Grace was helping in the kitchen; she wouldn't be discouraged. And he didn't like being called Vincent either, though he wasn't sure he liked Sheeney any better. Unfamiliar people would look at him and hear "Sheeney" and right away, he could tell, they thought—Jew. He always got a little angry and quickly he would say that he went to St. Patrick's, and his family had always been Catholics.

"Don't you feel well?" Elizabeth Grace said.

"Yes, I feel well," he said, imitating her small, tight voice. Her face reddened in immediate blotches, and she turned and left him.

He was sorry he had been rude. It wasn't her fault. Sheeney tried to remember the man's face. He could see the features, but he had lost the expression. He could still hear the words but not the voice. He was left with an impression, and it wasn't enough.

His cousin Eddie stopped him. "How come you're moping around?" he asked.

"I'm not moping," Sheeney said, impatient to talk to Paul.

"You're not eating anything," Eddie said, and he was looking at Sheeney's plate.

Sheeney gave him the cake and ice cream. To look at him, you wouldn't think Eddie was so smart. He had pop-eyes and the lids were always partly closed, and he held his head to the right side as if his neck were tired; but he was only fifteen and he was ready to graduate from high school. Everybody said he could do a lot if he settled down, but he didn't care much about school and he was always getting into trouble; already he had gotten into a lot of trouble with some girl in Junior High School. Sheeney watched him gulping down the food. Eddie always ate that way, but he stayed skinny, and it only showed in pimples. Sheeney made up his mind that he would not have pimples when he went to high school. If necessary, he wouldn't eat at all. He watched the last mouthful disappear. "That man was a funny one, wasn't he?" Sheeney said.

Eddie was smart, and he wasn't directly involved. "I mean the one who screamed at everybody."

"He was crazy," Eddie said, licking his fingers.

"But why did he pick on us?"

"He just wandered by. The world is full of nuts. You ought to see the guy who teaches me Math."

"I don't know," Sheeney said, unconvinced.

"Look. Anytime you get a crowd together for a parade, or a fire, or anything else, there are bound to be some nuts around. Crowds draw them. If all of you had stood there long enough, another one would have come along, and then another one and then another one. It's like a big merry-go-round."

"I think you're wrong," Sheeney said.

Eddie shrugged. "Who cares? Want to take a walk with me?"

"In a minute," Sheeney said. He still wanted to talk to Paul.

"I'm going to get another piece of that cake," Eddie said. "Then I'll be right with you."

Sheeney was left alone. Even his mother, talking now to Eddie, looked different to him. In the mirror over the fireplace, he saw himself, small, kinky-haired, dark-skinned—nothing. He had been something for a while. When the bishop had said, "I seal you with the sign of the cross," and tapped him on the cheek and said, "Peace be with you," then he had been something. He had been a soldier of Christ truly; but not a very strong one. A man yelled at him, one crazy man maybe, and he had lost it all. He was Sheeney again, and less than he had been before. He saw his face again, and Paul standing beside the mirror, and Sheeney had tears in his eyes. The room and Paul and his own face wavered away from him. His mother had told him that nothing could bother him if he saw his problem clearly enough. But what was there to see? His feelings were dark and had no face that he could remember. He wanted her arms around him, hugging him as she had done when he was a child.

Mother Mary had talked about Antichrist. He remembered her saying someday he would come. Sheeney shivered. He felt as if he were in a roomful of ghosts. Quickly, he pushed his way to Paul. When he stood beside him, he turned away and rubbed his hand in his eyes, and, as he did so, he saw Mort coming toward them. Sheeney was disgusted. He had wanted to talk to Paul alone, especially not with someone like Mort around. To Sheeney, Mort was another Elizabeth Grace, as fat, as soft, he even talked like her; at least she was a girl.

"Sheeney. Let's go for that walk," Eddie called.

"Come with us, Paul," Sheeney said.

"I'll go," Mort said.

Sheeney ignored him. "Want to, Paul?"

"I can't. My father's going to come by for me."

"Come on," Eddie said. He was next to them and had hold of the sleeve of Sheeney's jacket.

"I'll bet Father Boentz was mad about that crazy man," Sheeney said to Paul.

"No, I was surprised," Paul said. "He wasn't mad, even a little bit; but he wouldn't talk to me about it."

"What did he do?"

"I don't know. The last I saw, the man was still in the priest house."

"He didn't call the police or anything?"

"I guess he's sobering him up," Paul said.

"He wasn't drunk," Mort said. Sheeney looked impatiently at Mort who looked back at him and blinked and said again, "He wasn't drunk."

"I could smell his breath," Sheeney said. He tried to force himself to believe the man was only a drunk, but he couldn't, and that irritated him. "What do you know about it?" he said. Mort only blinked at him.

"Let's go," Eddie said.

"I shouldn't leave the party," Sheeney said. "What's so important about going for a walk?"

"I want to get something."

"Go ahead," Paul said. "I've got to go any second myself."

Sheeney followed Eddie across the room and out into the street. Behind him, Mort trailed along. Then Mort was between them and talking to Eddie. Sheeney could tell that Mort was doing his best to keep him out of the conversation and to appear important in Eddie's eyes. He kept asking Eddie questions about school and talking about the car he was going to own, and all the time Eddie was making a fool of him. Mort didn't notice or pretended not to. For a while, Sheeney enjoyed listening to Eddie give it to Mort, then they passed St. Pat's, and suddenly he was tired of listening. "Eddie," he said, "do you think there is a God?" He heard Mort gasp, and he didn't care.

Eddie only laughed. "How should I know?"

"What a horrible question that is," Mort said.

Sheeney said, "Do you think God is real?"

"I said I don't know. I never think about it."

"If He isn't, our confirmation was sort of stupid."

"Why? If it makes you happy."

"But Father Boentz would be lying to us. That wouldn't be any good. His whole life wouldn't be any good."

"How do you figure that? He's got a real deal going for him. No worries, no problems. I wouldn't mind having it that good myself if I could make a few changes."

"That isn't what I mean. He's supposed to be teaching people and helping them. How could he be doing that if he was lying to them at the same time?"

"It doesn't make much difference if the people concerned don't think he's lying. Look at my mother and father. They get mad and fight with me. Then they fight with each other. Then one night my father gets loaded and comes home late or he doesn't come home at all. They fight about that for a couple of weeks and then, all of a sudden, they haul off on a Saturday night and they go to confession. The next morning they go to communion. For a couple of weeks or so, they're so good you can practically see halos following them around—until it wears off and they start griping at me again. But in the meantime, he helps them; and they stay off my back. That sure helps me."

"Yes, but what if all of a sudden they thought that none of it was true."

"Not a chance. They don't think about anything if they can help it. You shouldn't either. You'll drive yourself buggy worrying about things like that."

They walked. "That man, today," Sheeney said. "Father Boentz took him into the house. I guess he's going to help him."

"It's a good trick if he can do it."

"But I'll bet he's going to try."

"That's his job. He can't expect to keep a soft job without doing a little work once in a while."

"I don't know," Sheeney said. "I wish I knew for sure."

"Forget it," Eddie said. "Join the army or don't, but don't sit around and worry about it. You're not ever going to be able to prove it to yourself anyway, unless you believe all that stuff about big miracles. If you're waiting for voices and tongues of flame to land on your head, you're crazier than that guy was." They were passing a bar. "Wait a minute," Eddie said and went inside. Sheeney and Mort waited in front. It was dark inside, and Sheeney could see no more than a faint red glow that looked as if it came from a fluorescent sign. He could hear music from a juke box.

"I'd hate to be around if Father Boentz heard your cousin," Mort said. Sheeney didn't answer. "Don't you think there's a God?" Mort said.

Sheeney looked at him; he looked too interested. "I guess I believe in Him. I made confirmation, didn't I? What are you going to do? Are you going to run around and tell everybody what Eddie and me said?"

"There is," Mort said. "I know it. I never have to wonder about it."

"Then why does God let there be crazy men?" Sheeney said abruptly. "What did that poor man ever do to Him? Why should somebody like that come along and bother us?"

"He wasn't crazy," Mort said. "He was scared. He was so scared about something, he didn't even know what he was doing."

Sheeney turned on him. "You know so much," he said. But that fat face was gone, and for a spasm of time, he saw the man's wild look, and the way he had jerked his arms when he yelled, and the way he had kept swallowing. "What was he scared about?"

"How do you expect me to know? Maybe he had yelled at some other people too, and the cops were chasing him. Maybe they were after him, just around the corner."

"That's a stupid answer," Sheeney said. "You know so much." But maybe Mort was right. Father Boentz took the man into the house. He hadn't called the police, and he hadn't called for a doctor either. It didn't look as if he thought the man was crazy. Sheeney wasn't going to let Mort think that he might agree with him. He concentrated on the neon sign that wrote "Murphy's Place" over and over again in the only clear space of the otherwise red-painted glass.

"Mother Mary says we can't understand God or His ways," Mort said. "We aren't to question Him in anything." Sheeney felt like smashing him in the face.

As he came out of the bar, Eddie said, "Jesus. That guy in there is a real crank."

"Did you buy yourself something to drink?" Mort said.

"What do you think he was doing?" Sheeney said.

"I got these," Eddie said, holding up the pack. "All I wanted was cigarettes, and he tried to give me a big sermon."

"He didn't buy a drink," Mort said and looked at Sheeney and blinked.

Eddie shook out the cigarettes. "Have one," he said to Sheeney

"I don't want it."

"Go on," Eddie said. "Now that you're God-fearing, you've got to have something to fear." Sheeney took one. He would hold it, no more.

"Mother Mary says if God meant us to smoke, He'd have made us chimneys," Mort said.

"That was Sister Florence," Sheeney said.

"It doesn't matter."

"Where can I smoke it?" Sheeney said.

Eddie pointed across the street to where two billboards formed a V in the front of an empty lot. "Let's go behind those."

Sheeney led the way and when he felt Mort's disapproving look on him, he stuck the cigarette in his mouth. He walked around the corner of one of the boards and stopped. In the apex of the V a man sat, his knees drawn up, his cheek resting on them, his face hidden by a crinkled hat.

"Look what we found," Eddie said.

The man raised his head.

"A real, genuine tramp," Eddie said.

The man was watching them walk toward him. His clothes were filthy and too large, and in the shadowed corner where he sat, he reminded Sheeney of a dog he had once found in a blind alley between two houses. He remembered that the dog had lunged at him at the last second, and he walked carefully. He stopped a few feet away. He could see that under the dirt, the man was pale, that he looked exhausted. The left side of his shirt was torn, and there was a blood-stained rag tied around his foot. "What happened to you?" Sheeney said.

For a moment, he didn't think the man was going to answer him, and then he did. "I fell off a freight."

"You ought to get yourself fixed up."

"Am I bothering you?" the man said.

"What a miserable no-good he is," Eddie said.

"What's that smell?" Mort said. He backed away. The man looked dispassionately at him.

"All bums smell like that," Eddie said. "It's a combination of smells. Want me to name them for you?"

"No." Mort frowned and backed off some more.

"Mostly it's because they never wash. When's the last time you got near water?" Eddie said to the man.

"You ought to leave him alone," Sheeney said. "He doesn't feel good."

"That's a shame," Eddie said and turned back again. "Where did you come from?" Still the man didn't answer. "Can't you talk?" Eddie started to leave then changed his mind. "That's a classy hat you're wearing. Isn't that a great hat, Mort?"

"It sure is."

"I've got an idea," Eddie said. "Let's see who can knock it off. Whoever knocks off the hat first gets the smokes." He moved back a few feet, picked up a rock. "It's my pack; I get the first couple of tries." He threw the rock, and it struck a foot or two above the man's head; the next hit the man in the leg. "Come on," Eddie said.

"Lay off," Sheeney said.

Mort took a rock and threw it, but stiff-elbowed in his girl's way, and it came nowhere near. Eddie threw another that hit the man in the palm of the hand he held upraised, not in front of his face, but off to the side like the bishop had held his hand when he had given them benediction. Then the man took off his hat and placed it in his lap. He had gotten a cut near the front of his scalp when he had fallen, and the band of his hat had crusted the blood in an uneven line across his forehead. He stared at them; he didn't seem especially frightened. Eddie stood, glaring, then he turned and walked away. "Let's go someplace that doesn't stink," he said.

"I would have hit it on the next try," Mort said.

Sheeney refused to go. He watched them leaving. He turned, came close again. The man's expression was unchanged. He seemed only tired, and patient. He watched Sheeney's every move. Sheeney bent and looked directly into his eyes. They looked like Mrs. Hansen's had when Sheeney had served at little Christy's funeral. Mr. Hansen had cried the whole time, but Mrs. Hansen had kept trying to get Father Boentz to look at her; but he had had to keep reading and keep walking around the casket, sprinkling it with holy water. Finally, she had looked at Sheeney and kept looking at him, and he couldn't get away from her eyes. And he had recognized that she was asking him for help. What could he do? He had no powers, and Christy was dead. And now today, that screaming man. Sheeney could see him now all right. The man had stood right in front of him. His voice had screamed that they were being filled full of lies; that none of it was true and they shouldn't believe it; that there was no God. But his face hadn't said it. His face had asked Sheeney for help too. He wanted Sheeney to give him back what he had lost.

Oh, God, why should these people come to him? He had nothing to give them. "I'm sorry," he said to the man in front of him now.

"Get away from me, Jew."

"Let me see your hand," Sheeney said.

"I told you to get away from me."

"Please," Sheeney said. "I'm not going to hurt you."

The man looked at him a long moment then held out his hand. From the slitted puncture wound a small line of blood moved, rust-olive colored, through the dirt. Sheeney wrapped it with his handkerchief. "Wait," he said as the man started to draw back. "Here." From the new wallet in his pocket, he took the five-dollar bill and folded it and closed the man's fingers around it tightly. The man winced and Sheeney said again, "I'm sorry." He took the hat and set it back on the man's head and got up. "Don't leave," Sheeney said. "I'll come back. I'll bring you something to eat."



Marble Garden

(A Simultaneous Poem)

Curve of groin, sweeps
to rise of breast, breaks
to flaking face; bird rest
in time of birds, rain wrapped
in time of rain, sun bleached
in time of sun, dead
in time. Chipped up
from a limestone, crystaled
in a molten time
in a marble garden, opaque
in a crystal cold
tall in a garden, columned
in stripped and bony birch

All in life
with death,
All swinging
from branches
Of never to be finished trees
Growing from the bones
and bodies
Of our souls

The year, whitened,
dying,
And we are warmed
by decay.

—Parker Hodges

John Strother Clayton

The Sister Figure in the Works of Tennessee Williams

*He runs incessantly about the streets and seeks—
the sister.*

Wilhelm Stekel

*Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me,
but I am more faithful than I intended to be!*

Tom Wingfield

The Glass Menagerie

Tennessee Williams has written a number of stories in the first person. Unquestionably a portion of these stories contain factual incidents from his own life. Doubtless other portions are factual in spirit if not in detail. But it must be remembered that as a poet Williams was under no compulsion to present us with history, indeed quite the opposite as Aristotle pointed out in his famous phrase in Chapter 9 of the *Poetics*: "The difference between a poet and a historian is this: the historian relates what has happened, the poet what could happen."

It is my intent to direct attention to the poet's truth rather than the historian's in Williams' "autobiographical" fiction. He himself warns us, mildly, to take care about accepting such material as gospel: "No, I am not putting all of these things in their exact chronological order, I may as well confess it, but if I did I would violate my honor as a teller of stories. . . ." Unless this is kept in mind, a considerable disservice may be done both the reader and Mr. Williams. What follows is the past of memory, of fantasy, and of fiction, and our concern will be with characters (including Williams himself) as they appear in fiction, not with Williams or his sister as they may or may not be in reality.

The central element of Williams' past, as he presents it to us in his fiction, is his sister, a sister who became for him the only person in the world who accepted him without reservation, who share his secret world with him, who loved him, and whom he loved with all the emotional intensity of a deeply sensitive and lonely child. For Williams, as he presents himself in his writing, was both. In his writing it is painfully clear that he lives with his nerve endings raw and exposed, hypersensitively aware of all that impinges upon the senses: sounds, odors, colors, images—only the sense of taste (in the literal meaning of the word) seems to be absent in his vivid awareness of the world about him. To some the "thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to" hardens the metal of their being, tempers the steel; others, experiencing the same or similar traumas, soften so that the slightest pressure leaves its impression for a lifetime. The new boy in every neighborhood in the country is challenged by the local Tom Sawyer, or as in *Rebel Without a Cause*, forced to prove his manhood in a "chicken run" held by the neighborhood gang. The town hellion who is the minister's son is part of our folklore; the competition between father and son a staple of popular television and screen fare. The ninety-seven pound weakling who, having been bullied on the beach, realizes his fantasies by himself becoming a bully on the beach has produced untold scores of muscle builders with similar ambitions.

Tennessee Williams remained the physically delicate child who did not send away for the barbells, the bullied son who did not fetch Pap a clout alongside the head and escape on a Mississippi raft, the new boy who stayed home when the "chicken-run" was held, and the minister's (grand)son who delayed becoming a hellion until he was old enough to vote.

He stayed at home with his sister. And her love for him and his love for her was the only strength and escape and rebellion that he knew—until he began to write.

The sister appears most clearly in the short *Portrait of a Girl in Glass*, the sketch which was later realized as the poignant memory play, *The Glass Menagerie*, and in the clinical detailed, sensitively written case history of his childhood, *The Resemblance Between a Violin Case and a Coffin*, first published in *Flair Magazine* in 1950. In the latter story Williams describes the painful experience of the break-up of the companionship with his sister to which he so desperately clung as a substitute for the other relationships normal to childhood. His situation, evidently, did not go unnoticed by his family. "They were continually asking me why I did not make friends with other children," he writes. "I was ashamed to tell them that other children frightened me. . . ." As for the sister, her "wild imagination and inexhaustible spirit made all other substitute companions seem like the shadows of shades. . . ."

In *The Resemblance Between a Violin Case and a Coffin* we meet most of the elements that will be with us again and again in his work: the seldom present father, "whom I should say, in passage, was a devilish man, possibly not understood but certainly hard to live with," out on the road with his sample case on long trips; the homosexual attachment for the handsome Richard Miles whom "I resented . . . fiercely even though I began, almost immediately after learning of his existence, to dream about him as I had formerly dreamed of storybook heroes;" the developing sense of guilt as "I had begun to associate the sensual with the impure, an error that tortured me during and after pubescence;" and the displaced incest-love, "The transference of my interest to Richard now seemed complete. I would barely notice my sister. . . ."

The progression Williams describes is quite clear. He and his sister enjoy a separate world together. His sister reaches puberty, develops mysterious symptoms, and is treated with new gravity and deference by the mother and grandmother. "In this way was instituted the time of estrangement that I could not understand. From that time on the division between us was ever more clearly established." And, as the basis for deep antagonism, "It seemed that my mother and grandmother were approving and conspiring to increase it." Now, almost overnight, his sister's long copper curls are removed, the costume changed, and "I noted . . . she had now begun to imitate the walk of grown ladies, the graceful and quick and decorous steps of my mother. . . ."

"For the first time, yes, I saw her beauty. I consciously avowed it to myself, although it seems to me that I turned away from it, averted my look from the pride with which she strolled into the parlor and stood by the mantel mirror to be admired. And it was then, about that time, that I began to find life unsatisfactory as an

explanation of itself and was forced to adopt the method of the artist of not explaining but putting the blocks together in some other way that seems more significant to him. Which is a rather fancy way of saying I started writing. . . ."

And now, into the scene, comes the young and handsome Richard Miles, carrying his violin case for he is to play in a duet with the sister, who plays the piano. Together, they must rehearse, and, naturally, the sister experiences her first true love. It is a wretched experience, for it turns her into an idiot at the keyboard, forgetting passages of music, making clumsy mistakes, feeling the despair of appearing a fool in the eyes of someone she worships with all the power of adolescence. The best that can be said about the situation is that Richard is kind, helping her through the tough passages, encouraging her when she despairs. To all of this, the young author is a silent and absorbed witness. At first he watches in bitter jealousy this warm relationship with the only person who belongs to him. But as he watches their young and innocent relationship develop, a strange thing happens; he finds himself erotically stimulated by the sight of their rehearsal together. Can it be that Richard is all that he longs to be? Handsome, talented, the love object of his sister? No, of course that is not it. He does not wish to be Richard. Such are not his fantasies. Nor does he wish to love his sister. That would never do. If he is stimulated by the sight, it cannot be because he loves the sister, it must be because he loves Richard. Of course. And so, "The transference of my interest to Richard now seemed complete. I would barely notice my sister. . . ." Serve her right too. Teach her to desert him!

Is this the answer to the story he tells? Possibly. I do not know. Speculation is inevitable. In any event his fantasy world is now built upon homosexual daydreams involving Richard, and, on one occasion, as he watches a gentle embrace pass between them when his sister has become upset over her repeated failures at the piano, "my body learned, at least three years too early, the fierceness and fire of the will of life to transcend the single body, and so to continue to follow light's curve and time's. . . ." And of course, the feeling of guilt as he says to himself "Yes, Tom, you're a monster!"

In the story *Portrait of a Girl in Glass* we come to know the sister better—the sister as she will appear to us later in *The Glass Menagerie* and as her ghost will appear in many other ladies to come. Here the locale is part of the new and difficult period of Williams' life, when his family had moved to St. Louis where he was to experience the horror of "a small wage earner in a hopelessly routine job," where he was to learn what it meant to be among the have-nots and so regarded, and where he was to live

amid bleak surroundings, watching the slow deterioration of his sister which was eventually to lead her to a mental institution. It is here in this drab depression home that we first meet "Laura," who "made no positive motion toward the world but stood at the edge of the water, so to speak, with feet that anticipated too much cold to move."

It is in this story that Williams gives us an early glimpse of his great talent for effectively utilizing concrete surroundings for both their dramatic and symbolic value. The alley below the sister's room is called Death Valley because in it cats are trapped by a "particularly vicious dirty white Chow who stalked them continually." From this world, Laura retreats. "The areaway had grown to be hateful to Laura because she could not look out on it without recalling the screams and the snarls of killing. She kept the shades drawn down, and . . . her days were spent almost in perpetual twilight." Within this setting, Williams evokes a memorable image, "The charm of the room was produced by his sister's collection of glass. . . . When you entered the room there was always this soft, transparent radiance in it which came from the glass absorbing whatever faint light came through the shades on Death Valley."

The girl who had been his alter ego as a child, whose fingers had stumbled over the keys in the presence of a handsome lad, is now too shy and withdrawn to face the world. To her, Williams gives three avenues of escape from reality: her animals, her records, and a book.

The animals provide her with a fantasy world and fantasy companionship; the records take her back into the past. "Laura seldom cared for these new records, maybe because they reminded her too much of the noisy tragedies in Death Valley or the speed-drills at the business college. The tunes she loved were the ones she had always heard." From the book, *Freckles*, by Gene Stratton Porter, Laura is provided with a "phantom lover." According to Williams, *Freckles*, "a one-armed orphan youth who worked in a lumber-camp, was someone that she invited into her bedroom now and then for a friendly visit. . . ." These avenues—the past, fantasy, the phantom lover—will all appear again.

The Laura of *Portrait of a Girl in Glass* is essentially the same person when she reappears in *The Glass Menagerie*, though she has been deprived of her phantom lover. She has been compensated for this loss, however, by the addition of a physical flaw—a device that Williams will utilize frequently throughout his work—both to represent and to account for the flawed nature of her character. It is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual flaw.

When we next see the sister, a considerable change has taken place, though the family group remains the same: mother, sister, brother, and absent father. They appear in another of Williams' memory plays, *The Long Goodbye*, which deals with a young Depression writer during the early days of the Roosevelt administration. He alone remains in the apartment once occupied by his family, and he, too, is moving on. As workmen remove the contents of the apartment various elements evoke memories from the past, some of which are dramatized while others are narrated. The theme of the play is stated in a conversation between brother, Joe, and a companion, Silva:

SILVA: Goodbye? 'S not in my vocabulary! Hello's the word nowadays.

JOE: You're kidding yourself. You're saying goodbye all the time, every minute you live. Because that's what life is, just a long, long goodbye! To one thing after another! Till you get to the last one, Silva, and that's—goodbye to yourself!

During the "flashbacks" we see the gradual estrangement between Joe and his sister, Myra. Joe is jealous and suspicious of the girl's suitors, accuses her of cheap conduct, and triumphantly confronts her with the evidence of premeditation—a contraceptive—dropped by one of her callers. (A dramatic device, incidentally, which was to be repeated in *The Rose Tattoo* to the scandalized view of drama critic Robert Coleman who professed to be "revolted.") That Joe is more than justified in his suspicions is possible, indeed probable, as Myra infinitely prefers the escape she has chosen to the deadly, poverty-ridden life of a shop girl. So the sister who goes out with other men disappears from his life, looking like a whore—"like a cheap one, Myra, one he could get for six!" And the brother is left alone.

Of course another kind of ending to the story is possible. The sister need not desert the brother. Indeed if one may dream—and why not?—the brother can possess the sister. It is a dangerous thought, a guilty thought, a thought that should be hidden. But it is a consummation devoutly to be wished by the brother figure in Williams' works.

The wish is fulfilled, interestingly enough, in the only verse-drama that Williams has published, *The Purification*, a symbolic fantasy more or less located in a country similar to that found around Taos, New Mexico, which on the surface seems to tell of a murder investigation-trial conducted along ritualistic lines. The characters are Spanish ranchers and Indians. The family group

consists of the father, mother, brother, and sister. It appears that a young girl (the sister) has been murdered, and in the course of the investigation it is revealed that she had married a former repairman who is now a rancher. Their union was never consummated. She has had an incestuous relationship with her brother which has led the rancher-husband to kill her with an axe when he finds them together. The play concludes with the suicide of the brother and the husband.

While *The Purification* is doubtless one of Williams' minor efforts, it is nevertheless a crucial play for the student of his writing. Unfortunately, a detailed examination of the elements that appear in *The Purification* necessitates a more liberal reference to the body of Tennessee Williams' work than the length of this article permits. In addition, much of the material is too clinical for general interest. It is sufficient to note that in *The Purification* the brother possesses the sister, but the price is heavy: disgrace for the family, death for the sister, guilt and death for the brother. But must the conclusion reached in *The Purification*—guilt and atonement—be the penalty? It is possible for brother and sister to remain together, even to marry? Can it possibly be arranged for them to live free from guilt happily ever after? With a little ingenuity, it can.

To accomplish this purpose, Williams (with a young collaborator, Donald Windham) chose to adapt a short story by D. H. Lawrence entitled "You Touched Me," which is included in a Lawrence collection, *England My England and Other Stories* (New York, 1922), pp. 147-171. The changes made by Williams in adapting the Lawrence story are striking as he changes the pattern to conform to the family situation of Mother, Father, Sister, and Brother. The treatment of the sister figure will serve as an example of the transformation. In order to illustrate this, a few details from the D. H. Lawrence story need to be mentioned. As written by Lawrence, "You Touched Me" deals with the Rockley sisters, Matilda and Emmie, who live in an ugly, brick house amid a now abandoned pottery which has been "permanently shut." At the beginning of the story Matilda and Emmie are already "old maids," though Matilda is only thirty-two, while her sister is two years younger. Matilda is described as "a tall, thin, graceful girl, with a rather large nose," while Emmie is shorter and plumper and looks up to her older sister "whose mind was naturally refined and sensible." When the girls were in their teens, Ted Rockley, the father, having had four daughters and no sons, adopted a boy of six from a London charity institution. The boy's name is Hadrian. He is never really accepted by the sisters and eventually runs away, making his living in Canada, fights in World War I, and returns to

the Rockley home on leave after the war. Hadrian, now twenty-one, proposes marriage to the thirty-two year old Matilda. Matilda refuses. The father changes his will to read that if she refuses his request, the entire estate will go to Hadrian. As the father is dying, Matilda decides to marry Hadrian.

As adapted for the stage by Williams (with Donald Windham) the play *You Touched Me!* has a number of suggestive changes. The thirty-two year old Matilda of the large nose has somehow changed to "Matilda is at the tea-table polishing silver and washing little glass ornaments. She is a girl of twenty and has the delicate, almost transparent quality of glass." Matilda is portrayed as "dreamy," not taking part in the conversation when the minister calls, and—when Hadrian is expected home—she says, "I won't stay. I can't stay. I'll take a trip somewhere . . . I feel unbearably self-conscious with him around. I couldn't speak to him in a natural voice."

This reaction is identical to the one experienced by Tom in *The Resemblance Between a Violin Case and a Coffin*. Secretly attracted to Richard Miles, Tom flees in his presence. ". . . I did a thing so grotesque that I could never afterward be near him without a blistering sense of shame. Instead of taking the hand, I ducked away from him . . . and fled into a drugstore just beyond." And again, "I never knew when the front door might open on Richard's dreadful beauty and his greeting which I could not respond to, could not endure, must fly grotesquely away from." This reaction formation will be a characteristic of many of Williams' characters (notably, Miss Collins in *Portrait of a Madonna*, who, interestingly enough, also flees from a handsome man she loves named Richard). "Why are you running away?" asks Emmie of Matilda in *You Touched Me!*

There is more than a suggestion in the play that the Captain has adopted his own illegitimate child in Hadrian. When Hadrian announces to the Captain that he has found a woman, the Captain is unable to imagine who it could be—guesses it to be Phoebe, the buxom, comic maid.

HADRIAN: No, not Phoebe.

CAPTAIN: Who, then?

HADRIAN: *Matilda!*

CAPTAIN: (*Suddenly grave.*) What? Your sister?

HADRIAN: She isn't my sister. We're not blood relations.

The fantasy is complete. It is all right for Hadrian, because of course they are not really blood relations—or are they?

CAPTAIN: Hadrian is my son.

EMMIE: Matilda is your daughter. Are you—mad?

Mad or sane, the father approves the wedding, and—as Hadrian observes—“Why shouldn’t she want me? I’m lonely and looking about for love—and so is she.” The only problem that remains is to realize physically what intellectually has been rationalized as acceptable. What will the relationship be? Hadrian speaks to Matilda:

Why nothing in the world is as gentle as you are. You’re as delicately put together as—one of those misty little white cottony things that float around in the sunlight, scarcely seeable, they are so fine and soft. Touch them? You wouldn’t dare. It’s almost too much to look at them. When I escaped from the prison camp, I had to stick a knife in a guard. As he went down, I saw he was only a kid and just as—gentle—as you are. The life in him yielded as softly as tissue paper. I knew very well that gentle things, such as that boy and you, are made to be gently treated. Barely touched, hardly breathed upon. Look! (*She looks at his outstretched hand.*) Do these impress you as being dangerous fingers? Do they look to be fierce and cruel. They’re not. They wouldn’t dare touch you without your permission. And if they did, having secured your permission, they’d do it so lightly, with such respect that they’d draw back the moment they moved forward. They’d be more frightened than you are of using too much pressure—of bruising—or leaving the tiniest scar. I’m a gentle person.

In this passage we have an example of lines that have a clear-cut stage value, while containing a number of other insights available to the reader. The stage value is, of course, the kindness of the hero, Hadrian, as he gently approaches the frightened, over-shy Matilda—soothing her, reassuring her. Beyond that, however, are clearly embedded the themes of incest and guilt.

Here we find the desire for the sister, the gentle hands (even with permission!) “draw back the moment they move forward.” Here too the sister is portrayed—not as she is by D. H. Lawrence—but as the sister image we have met: delicate, shy, loved by the brother who is more frightened (and guilty) of leaving the tiniest scar than she is. It is also possible to find in the escape from prison

fantasy (which does not appear in the Lawrence story) the symbolic account of the brother figure's own escape from the prison of his home—an escape which necessitated (as he testifies in *The Glass Menagerie*) cruelty toward the guard, i.e., the mother who held him in prison. This is not to suggest that such symbolism (if it exists at all) is intentional, nor, again, of immediate value in stage interpretation. In reviewing William's total work, however, it is difficult not to reach some such conclusion as is suggested above.

Matilda is strongly attracted to Hadrian—as he is to her—but she is too shy to reveal it. As soon as Hadrian appears, Matilda announces a fictitious trip that she is taking that evening. Throughout the play she is portrayed as afraid of life, as she has always been:

HADRIAN: You were afraid of everything in those days.

MATILDA: I still am.

But when the chips are down, it is Hadrian, the brother, who is unable to make the final, physical move. Urged by the Captain-Father that the only way to win her is to "grab her," Hadrian girds up his loins for the attempt, but at the last moment his nerve fails. It is the sister who must take the step. Note the opening line:

HADRIAN: . . . it's *you* that I want, Matilda—not books, not poems!

MATILDA: What's stopping you, you fool?

HADRIAN: (*Goes to her awkwardly, like a boy. . . .*) Little girl with broken doll, Matilda! Matilda, Matilda, Matilda! Ring out little bells in heaven, little silver Matilda, little bells! (*He holds her against him, rocking and swaying in tender delight.*)

MATILDA: (*Laughs softly*) Don't—be crazy!

HADRIAN: Little silver Matilda, little bells, little bells! She's broken her doll. I broke it. She's slipped away and I've caught her—not far off. Little silver Matilda, little bells! (*Her head hangs so that her hair sweeps over her face. He tenderly brushes it back.*) Little Matilda, where are you hiding?

MATILDA: (*Softly and joyously.*) Nowhere! (*She throws her arms about him and returns his embrace with an equal abandon.*) Not any more!

The fantasy is complete. The brother can marry the sister and live happily ever after—free from guilt.

The sister will not appear as the sister again. But it should be noted that the girl Hadrian achieves is a child. He goes to her

"awkwardly, like a boy" and she is the "little girl with broken doll" who has been hiding from him, but who now embraces him with "equal abandon." The girl child will remain the fantasy object or the remembered sexual ideal for a number of Williams' men.

In *Summer and Smoke*, produced by Margo Jones at the Music Box Theatre in New York City, October 6, 1948, Williams introduces us to ten year old Alma, who has "a quality of extraordinary delicacy and tenderness or spirituality in her, which must set her distinctly apart from other children." Alma is a minister's daughter and lives in the rectory next door to a boy named John. She is very much taken with John, but he is not having much to do with girls at this age, an omission for which he overcompensates considerably as a grown man. Alma, however, as an adult, takes on a character now quite familiar to us. In her middle twenties she has "something prematurely spinsterish about her. An excessive propriety and self-consciousness is apparent in her nervous laughter; her voice and gestures belong to years of church entertainment, to the position of hostess in a rectory. People her own age regard her as rather quaintly and humorously affected. She has grown up mostly in the company of her elders. Her true nature is still hidden even from herself."

Alma still worships John (now a doctor and a rake) and displays the usual violent reaction whenever she is in the presence of her true love, shaking as though with a chill and laughing nervously. (The faint echo of a child's fingers stumbling over the piano keys sounds in our ears.) John is even interested in her, but somehow—what with one thing and another—the two never seem able to get together. John does not marry the grown Alma; he marries the girl-child Nellie, a precocious youngster (her mother is the town whore) who aggressively pursues John, attacks him (he is considerably impressed, "Where did you learn such tricks?"), and succeeds in landing him. "Excuse her, Miss Alma. Nellie's still such a child," says John as Nellie "rushes up to John and hugs him with childish squeals." So John marries the child, and Alma is left to secure her own salvation picking up traveling salesmen on street corners who have found that "hotel bedrooms are lonely." But, as Alma says, "All rooms are lonely where there is only one person."

Camino Real, which had its Broadway premiere on March 19, 1953, presents us with Esmeralda, the Gypsy's daughter, as a prostitute for whom the vagabond Kilroy pawns his worldly possessions and eventually his solid-gold heart. In her last appearance at the end of the play, the ghost of the sister figure may once again be faintly seen: "Esmeralda appears in a childish nightgown beside

her gauze-tented bed on the Gypsy's roof. Her Mother appears with a cup of some sedative drink, cooing . . .

GYPSY: Beddy-bye, beddy-bye, darling. It's sleepy time down South and up North, too, and also East and West! . . . Drink your Ovaltine, Ducks and the sandman will come on tip-toe with a bag full of dreams.

ESMERALDA: I want to dream of the Chosen Hero, Mummy.

GYPSY: Which one, the one that's coming or the one that is gone?

ESMERALDA: The *only* one, Kilroy! He was *sincere*!

The search of the child-sister reaches its apparent apogee in *Sweet Bird of Youth* which opened on March 10, 1959, at the Martin Beck Theatre in New York. In this play, the tragic hero, Chance Wayne, pursues with dedicated single-mindedness the image of his youthful mistress (she was fifteen) Heavenly Finley. Everything he does is apparently motivated by the dream of recapturing this girl he has long since lost, and no amount of reality can dissuade him from this dream. Even the certain approach of castration, which he may escape only by abandoning his quest, leaves him unmoved. When his dream is destroyed he no longer cares. Heavenly is both a person and a symbol, of course, as Williams makes clear in his play: "When she undressed, I saw that her body was just then, barely, beginning to be a woman's . . . I said, oh, Heavenly, no, but she said yes, and I cried in her arms that night, and didn't know that what I was crying for was—youth, that would go."

CHANCE: I go back to Heavenly, or I don't. I live or die. There's nothing in between for me.

AUNT NONNIE: What you want to go back to is your clean, unashamed youth. And you can't.

There is no going back. Heavenly is now a living corpse, destroyed by Chance, and Chance has long since been corrupted by the world. But seemingly, it is only the child-sister image that can provide the seeker with love. To grow is to die or to fail—in some mysterious way—to effectively meet his need.

This is the failure that we meet in Catherine, the unfortunate heroine of *Suddenly Last Summer* which was given a successful off-Broadway production (with *Something Unspoken*) under the title of *Garden District* on January 7, 1958. Frequently referred to as Williams' play about cannibalism, it is more accurately described by John Gassner as revolving "around the fate of a degenerate poet . . . in search of exotic and homosexual experience." Gassner found the play to be "a work of overwhelming power . . . born of

the bleakest pessimism and of a most desperate view of the world," an opinion generally shared by other critics who viewed it. The critic for *The Saturday Review*, Henry Hewes, felt that he could "find autobiographical hints in the deceased Stephen Venable," the poet of the play, and closer examination would seem to reveal more than hints. Catherine is a neurotic young woman who has been confined in an asylum as a result of the shocking death of the poet. The dramatic question of the play seems to be whether or not she is actually mad. However, since the audience doubtless reaches an early decision that she is telling the truth, the suspense chiefly lies in her gradual unfolding of the circumstances surrounding the poet's death. The circumstances are grisly enough, the poet having been slain and partly devoured by a group of starving children. Until recently—so the story goes—the poet's constant companion has been his mother. Incapacitated by illness, she is left behind by Stephen who chooses Catherine, his cousin, to take the mother's place. As the mother, Mrs. Venable, says, "A poet's vocation is something that rests on something as thin and fine as the web of a spider, Doctor. That's all that holds him *over*!—out of destruction. . . . Few, very few are able to do it alone! Great help is needed! I *did* give it! She *didn't*." And to this attack Catherine replies, "She's right about that. I failed him. I wasn't able to keep the web from—breaking. . . ."

Exactly how she failed him is not clear, either to Catherine, or to us. She loved him, she says. "In what way did you love him?" asks the doctor. "The only way he'd accept," Catherine replies, "a sort of motherly way."

The progression of the sister figure in the works of Tennessee Williams is clear. A montage of his short stories and plays would present her as a child desired by the brother. She is a delicate and shy creature, and the brother figure experiences a great deal of guilt because of his desire for her. Though he may experience fantasies in which a relationship between them is realized in their youth, maturity brings estrangement. Eventually the sister is degraded and destroyed. Williams' characters will continue to show an attraction for the child-woman, and his mature women will continue to be portrayed as promiscuous and degraded or (in the case of the mother figure) dominant vampires who drain the man of vitality as they seek to subject him to their own will and purpose. The sister figure derives her importance from her family relationships. When divorced from the family, she becomes another familiar Williams' figure, *The Delicate Lady*. Deprived of the security offered by either family or marriage, she will turn to fantasy, promiscuity, and madness, as we see her in Blanche Du Bois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, or Mrs. Harwicke-Moore in *The Lady of Larkspur*

Lotion, or Edith Jelkes in *The Night of the Iguana*, or Miss Collins in *Portrait of a Madonna*. It is almost as though some ritual revenge were taking place as the woman who dares to leave childhood must be driven to the asylum or branded as a whore.



This article is excerpted from Themes of Tennessee Williams, a dissertation presented to the faculty of the School of Drama of Yale University.



Unspoken

What clarity accompanies the corpse.
The eye in chemical silence
observes the quick.

I fear most the ceremony, the play of public
upon public in behalf of death.

I fear the whispers in their chairs,
the candles.

I fear those few hours of stillness,
the time to be forgotten.

Trees drink water and partake of minerals
without this charge. Friends, believe me,
I leave no soul at large.

—Henry Birnbaum

Terminations

1

The allegiance of art is lost
in polygamous converses. April
is the night after what is made,
and up the stairs

the voices
second motions of small rooms.
How does it happen?

2

Those afternoon men with hands
in secondhand bookshops and eye-
brows twisting words, are they
reading critically when they
sniff their sleeves?

Come on now
says the open shirt, these shelves
ain't meant for home.

For you, I
got one of them thin poetry books.

3

Forgive these extrapolations.
I lie. Yes, and often and often.
And I know those quill scratchers
and daily crimes.

Out my window
in a long lie, I make
a declaration.

—Henry Birnbaum

Two Men We've Wondered At

Most people worry
about who invented
the wheel. Did he
roll a log, come
upon an avalanche of
rounded rocks, slip
upon a pole?
From what shore, east
or west, north or south,
of what stream, lake,
ocean, did he come?
Was it warm that spring,
and had he just rolled
with his round bottomed
love?

Like most, I care
and wish I'd known him,
but granting this,
I prefer to think, to
wonder at the man
who held his leafy
shelter up (or perhaps
his archetypal underdrawers)
by constructing a simple
knot.

—Parker Hodges

Emily Crandall Rushworth

Jane

Mr. Gregory, elegantly seated on the high stool, crossed his legs and looked at the twenty wriggling virgins in the room. He despised beginners' art and he despised freshmen. They have only just been snatched from the womb, he thought with fastidious recoil. As he looked at the young faces in violent bloom, he felt fiercely glad that he was a loose-skinned forty, a man who had tasted all.

"Well, well, ladies, I really am going to have to pick up these charcoals at the end of the class. It's the most elementary of still lifes that I'm asking of you, after all, so do you think we might proceed, hmmm?"

He heard an ill-smothered yawn, which terminated in a small shriek.

"Yes, I can understand that some of us might have had difficult nights, but an eight o'clock class was your choice, not mine," Mr. Gregory said happily. "Now let me have a look at your work, as far as it went last time." He slipped down from the stool and strolled toward the drawing tables.

"Good morning, Miss Archer. Hmmm." He pulled his chin as he looked at Miss Archer's smudged offering.

"It isn't good, Mr. Gregory. I feel it isn't good. It doesn't tell me anything," Miss Archer said with an anxious scowl.

"I'm afraid it doesn't speak to me either," he commented. "No, it isn't very good, is it? You want to pay more attention to the vase, don't you? Well, well, see what you can do."

Dreadful, thought Mr. Gregory. Appalling. He stopped at the next table. "How unusual," he said. "That's the way you see it, is it? I never quite thought of it in that way." He moved on slowly, his gum-soled shoes giving him an ocelot-tread.

"Oh, rather nice, Miss Simmons! Really not too bad at all!"

"Ah, Miss Hartmann . . . do you think that this is quite what you mean to say? Don't you think that you might be able to put it a little more subtly?"

"Now, ah, this is just a little too abstract, I think, for this course, Miss MacDonald. All I ask is that you draw what you see, and here, I think, you miss the point altogether."

"But Mr. Gregory, I feel it this way, I truly do." Miss MacDonald waved dramatically at a furious mishmash of squares and circles.

"Look again, Miss MacDonald. Perhaps you were looking in the wrong corner of the room, hmmm?"

Mr. Gregory went from table to table, at times offering criticism, again making no comment other than an enigmatic hum.

"Oh yes, I like this. Yes, this is quite pleasing, don't you think so, Miss Matthews?"

"Yes, it's good," agreed Miss Matthews coldly. "I do feel that I could use a little more time than you're giving us, but otherwise it's quite good."

"Well, perhaps the impetus of a deadline will give it just the touch it needs."

"I think it needs time, rather than the touch, frankly."

"But you are not giving out the grades, are you, now, Miss Matthews?" Mr. Gregory left her, feeling pleased with his remark.

"Good morning, Miss Gustafson," he said pleasantly to a small girl who was looking with wrath into a sleep-clogged world. "You don't seem to be a hundred per cent with us today, do you? I ser-

iously doubt whether you heard my announcement about picking up the charcoals. And from what I observe . . ." he picked up Miss Gustafson's limp arm and peeped with disbelief at the drawing underneath, "I would suggest that you rub those sleepy little eyes and try to justify your existence in this classroom."

"What a dinosaur he is!" spat Miss Matthews several minutes later. "He makes me turn blue all over. What a terror! Why do we put up with him?"

"Because we love him, that's why," said Miss Gustafson, her face aching with unresolved yawns. "We hate him, but we really love him. Oh, I can't bear it!" She slumped onto her drawing table, dangling her fingers over its front.

"Oh, stop it, Gustafson," whispered Miss Matthews. "This ghastly class isn't that traumatic and anyway, I didn't get any more sleep than you did. You're giving in to yourself."

"I'm a night personality, that's my problem. Mornings are out for me. What I'm going to do about my husband's breakfast when I get married, I don't know. I worry about it all the time." Miss Gustafson took a languid delight in her problem. She gave a delicious stretch, then jumped with alarm when Mr. Gregory appeared in front of her table.

"Since your art course appears more emergent than marriage at this juncture, Miss Gustafson, I strongly suggest that you pay sufficient attention to it to merit a passing grade. Don't you?" He glided away.

"We can't discuss *anything* without that nasty old pussycat looming out of the shadows every five minutes." Miss Gustafson sighed. "And I'm not in any mood to look at that Face half the morning. Subhuman! Eeegh!" She looked crossly at her work.

The unforgiveable thing about Mr. Gregory was the fact that he looked like himself. The girls, in desperate battle for standardization, could not accept individuality. Mr. Gregory's suede waistcoats bewildered them, as did his blaring sports jackets and bizarre assortment of shoes. His chalk-perfect teeth made them suspicious. ("They're false, every one of them. They've got to be!") He had a thick, innocent mouth which he tried to hide with a busy moustache. It was neatly-clipped and very soft, as soft as his hair. He had the hair of a mink. Sometimes he washed it in beer, other times in beaten egg. From his eyebrows to his hairline ran his ladder of a brow. He rounded himself out with heavily-rimmed glasses, the color of smoke. He had a voice like glue. No one else was quite like Mr. Gregory.

"Well, ladies, shall we steal five minutes for the morning mail?" His voice was sticky with anticipation as he wondered what he

would read about himself on this day. Every head looked up. Doesn't this bring the little virgins to heel, he exulted. It was the pleasure of his girls to write notes to each other, and it was Mr. Gregory's greater pleasure to intercept as many of them as possible. Sometimes his hand came noiselessly down over a note an instant after its completion; on occasion he caught notes in transit, in mid-air. He was very fond of this. He too sometimes became bored in class.

Mr. Gregory smiled at the girls, pulled several wads from his pocket, and swung his right foot.

"'Help! Am in desperate need of advice!'" he read. "'J's mother is coming down this weekend to look me over. How utterly chronic! Do you think she'll be a dragon? What on earth am I going to wear? RSVP at once!'"

"Wear your best black, dear," said Mr. Gregory. "Every time." He opened another note.

"'Just between us, do you think Gregory is human? I mean, just look at him. Is he, or isn't he?'"

"I think the answer to that is fairly obvious," Mr. Gregory said. "No, he is not."

"'Write me a note. I'm suffocating.'"

"Hmmm."

"'I've come to a horrible conclusion. A. G. Gregory, B.A., M.D., PH.D., DDS. does *not* love me.'"

"You've never tried to make me love you, Miss Oliver. Produce me a handsome charcoal today, and you may have a chance." Miss Oliver writhed. She had disguised her handwriting.

"'Doesn't Archer look like a perfect dog today? When do you think she took a bath last?'" Miss Archer's color became high, and she stared in dumb embarrassment at Mr. Gregory, who felt a quick, pitying drop in mood.

"I think that Miss Archer, on the contrary, looks rather nice this morning," he said kindly. He felt that he had more strength than the girls to resist these small cruelties and much preferred it when they were directed against himself. He was not afraid of himself. "Well, well, where would you all be without your claws?"

The door opened quietly. A tall girl in an immense raincoat slid into the room and made for her drawing table.

"Good morning, Miss Holloway. Another restless night, I presume?"

"Terribly sorry, Mr. Gregory. I mean, the wretched alarm just didn't go off."

"I might make the suggestion, then, Miss Holloway, that you invest your allowance in a really adequate clock. I am only making this intrusion into your private affairs in order to warn you that if you are so much as a minute late to any future classes, I am going to count it as a cut. Do we understand each other, hmmm?" He beamed at Miss Holloway, who looked vaguely uncomfortable. "By the way, I'm picking up all charcoals today, Miss Holloway, yours included, I'm deeply sorry to say."

Miss Holloway slammed her portfolio on the table and drew from her purse several charcoal stubs wrapped in toilet paper. She worked steadily for ten minutes, lifting her head at intervals for sly peeps at Mr. Gregory, who sat with his hands crossed over his folded legs, looking straight at her. Finally he began making the rounds of the room again, to inspect the girls' progress.

Satisfied that she was no longer in focus, Miss Holloway inclined her body towards Miss Matthews. Her eyes were owl-bright. "You'll never guess. You'll *never* guess!"

Miss Matthews yawned. Miss Holloway's revelations, invariably about her love life, were beginning to bore her. "Who is it now, and what does he look like?"

"Men, for heaven's sake, how utterly fifth-grade!" Miss Holloway snuffled with scorn. "Here I come up with the item of the half-century, and you ask me about men!"

"Careful!" warned Miss Matthews, having observed that Mr. Gregory's head was raised, his ears prickling. They fell to work again.

"All clear!" Miss Matthews said a little later. Miss Holloway shot her a radiant glance.

"I saw her! I saw Mrs. G.!" she breathed. Miss Matthews promptly rewarded her with full attention. "A gargoyle, but I mean, a gargoyle! Skin and bones, and *precisely* the color of pork! Really divine! I routed myself around by his house this morning just on the off chance of having a snoop, and there she was. What a creature!"

"How absolutely exquisite!" Miss Matthews looked at Miss Holloway with respect. "What an excellent haul!"

"But . . ." added Miss Holloway grandly, "Wait until you hear the rest!—I really should charge for this—*what* do you think I saw, as well as?" She paused.

"Come on, come on, spit it out!" Miss Matthews grovelled. Miss Holloway gave her a long, dramatic look.

"I saw his daughter," she said. Miss Matthews' face sagged. She felt cheated.

"Well, what on earth is so special about a little girl?" she demanded. "Unless, of course, she's an exact duplicate of him?" she added hopefully.

"Much, much better than that," glittered Miss Holloway. "Oh, *how* can I describe this? I really lost my breath, I can tell you. There she was, sitting on the front porch, playing with a yo-yo, and she looked *right* at me! I almost shrieked! So, anyway . . ."

"Miss Holloway, Miss Matthews, how far can a man's patience be stretched? I am not running a nursery, I am conducting an art class. I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask that this incessant murmuring stop at once, otherwise I will ask you both to leave, treat your absences as full cuts, and give you both zero on this assignment. I couldn't put it any more plainly than that, now, could I?" Mr. Gregory looked as large as the room.

He was rewarded with gratifying silence. He felt cleansed after a reprimand. Harsh words, nonetheless, did not produce any artists, he reflected sadly. How can anyone feel or observe at eighteen, he wondered. It was almost obscene to commence a serious study of art at such an unopened age. And yet—and it seemed a great pity—at least two-thirds of these girls would doubtless trip through their lives without anything ever happening to them. A little fun, a little laughter they would know, perhaps, and a few dreary household tears, but nothing else. Mr. Gregory enjoyed these meditations, and he climbed back onto his stool to contemplate further the futures of his students.

Miss Matthews glanced warily at Miss Holloway, who returned the look with an agonized shrug.

"Write me a note," mouthed Miss Matthews, making a scribbling gesture. With a brick nod, Miss Holloway drew a piece of scrap paper from her portfolio. She cuddled her triumph for a moment before letting it go, and then she began to write.

The room was wonderfully still. Mr. Gregory felt so peaceful that he could have dozed off in an instant. These moments are good for me, he thought. He decided to scold the girls more often. The resolution heaped euphoria upon euphoria. Then he saw Miss Holloway sign her note with a great flourish. She began to fold it. The knowledge that she was accustomed to folding and refolding her notes until they turned into hard little pellets gave him time to slide casually from the stool and pad around the room.

"I do thank you, Miss Holloway," he said, removing the note from the back of her shoe. "I assume that you have finished your work and are just whiling away your time until the bell rings? I'll collect your masterpiece, as well, as long as I'm here, and I

trust that I'll be pleasantly surprised." He picked up the unfinished drawing and parted his lips in a little cat-smile.

"Oh, Mr. Gregory, give me back the note! Please, Mr. Gregory. I mean, it's terribly personal, it couldn't be *more* personal, and, um, I know you like to read these things, but you wouldn't want to invade a girl's most private thoughts, would you? What I mean is, well, it's just *terribly* personal, that's all. In fact, so much so that I wasn't going to let anyone read it, ever!" Miss Holloway was yellow with fright.

"Not even Miss Matthews, who was salivating with anticipation as she prepared to pluck this mot from your dainty slipper? Come now, Miss Holloway!"

Swollen with satisfaction, he returned to his seat.

Miss Holloway had the look of a four-year-old who is about to receive a terrible whipping. The class became paralyzed with anticipation, and not a single eager mind overlooked the beautiful possibility of hearing about a fall from virtue.

Mr. Gregory unfolded the paper with maddening slowness. Finally he cleared his throat.

"I'd better make this brief," he read. "To boil it right down, she's an idiot, my dear!"

"Good, Miss Holloway, good! You start out with impact. Your style is improving."

He continued. "'And better than that, she's a *Mongolian* idiot!'"

The back of Mr. Gregory's neck began to ache.

"If you could only have seen the face," he read calmly, "Thick, and a peculiar pink, with a fat nose, and a big *weird* mouth, and these ghastly slanted eyes . . . horrible! She never let the yo-yo stop until Mrs. Gregory came after her . . ."

There was a loud gasp. Mr. Gregory did not look up. Jane, he thought sickly.

"Of course, Mrs. G. snatched her out of sight *pronto*. The kid probably sneaked up from the cellar, don't you think? So . . . there you are, and don't you agree that it's worth a small fortune??? Old Lover, with an idiot child! . . . Isn't it too deliciously spooky? Love always, B.L.H.'"

There was not the slightest movement in the room. Jane, thought Mr. Gregory, his whole body aching terribly. Jane Mary Gregory. J.M.G. "Love always, J.M.G."

"You were right, Miss Holloway. It couldn't have been more personal." He looked, his face like an unwritten envelope, at the terror-shrunk young woman who had stripped and freaked his little girl. Miss Holloway started to cry.

I need to cry too, thought Mr. Gregory. He walked like a cripple to one of the windows.

"I must correct you on one point, however," he said, turning. "We do not keep our little girl—her name is Jane, by the way—in the cellar. She has her own room, quite pleasantly furnished, we think, and she helps to keep it clean. Also, she was not supposed to be out this morning, because she is just recovering from a cold, and when these children get colds, they are peculiarly receptive to serious infection. We shouldn't like to have anything happen to her. As it is, I doubt whether she will reach maturity. Mongols rarely do." Mr. Gregory looked at his watch.

"Jane is eight," he said to Miss Archer as he walked towards her. He took her drawing. "This still isn't very good, is it, Miss Archer?" She looked at him as though she feared that she would become infected if he touched her.

"It isn't hereditary, by the way." He went to the next table. "No one knows why it happens. And when it does happen, no one can do anything about it. You could have a Mongol, Miss Simmons, and if you did, Jane could be taken for your child's sister. That's a rather interesting point, hmmm? They all look as though they belong to the same family." He tucked Miss Simmons' charcoal under his arm.

"You complain that I don't love you, Miss Oliver, but still you don't try. However, we have until the end of May. You do understand, I hope, that this effort of yours simply isn't worthy of my love?"

He walked slowly down the room, picking up the drawings. I am only forty, he thought. I shouldn't feel as tired as this.

"The term, 'idiot' is a misnomer, I might add. Many of these children are, of course, idiots, and pitifully helpless. On the other hand, a good proportion of them test quite high. Jane is not an idiot. She is toilet-trained; she can dress herself; she talks. She can even knit." Jane had to be defended. He was glad that she was not an idiot, but he felt evil for thinking it. "I'm not saying that she isn't forgetful at times. Mrs. Gregory keeps having to . . . this is quite nice, Miss Rimberg. Yes, I'm really quite fond of this . . . jog her memory about all sorts of things. And of course she can be very naughty, and when she is, I must confess that I'm not above giving her a good spanking. Where is your charcoal, Miss Holloway? Oh, I picked it up a little while ago, didn't I? I'm inclined to be a bit forgetful myself at times."

The bell rang sharply. Mr. Gregory jumped. He felt a desperate wish to cancel out the noise of the bell, to keep the girls with him

a little longer, so that he could tell them about Jane. He wanted to rush to the door and stand against it, coaxing the girls to cut their next classes and stay with him.

"Well, well, until Friday, ladies, and may I make a plea for promptness and inspiration?"

The girls moved with slow disbelief towards the door, as though they had never expected to leave the room alive. They looked away from Mr. Gregory. They could not possibly meet his need. They had greater needs of their own. They had to Talk About It.

Mr. Gregory stacked the drawings neatly and put them in his closet. He looked with a sharp eye about the room. He wanted it to be tidy for the next class. He craved order. He regretted very much not having told the girls about what a nice little girl Jane was. He could even kiss her. For the first time, he loved her without hatred. No wedding for Jane, he thought, and he very nearly began to cry.

On Friday morning he looked as crisp as a lettuce, almost like a boy, wearing a mint green sweater, into which he had carefully tucked a grey foulard scarf. He greeted the girls with bright cordiality. They had crept into the room, looking sulkily afraid of him. His greeting managed to make a complete erasure of the previous class, and they began to chatter with nervous relief.

"Ladies, do you think we might have a little less persiflage and a little more work today, hmmm?" begged Mr. Gregory. "We have a rather more difficult assignment this time, but with a modicum of talent and a good deal of earnest endeavor, perhaps we can all muddle through. We are going to start our life class today."

The girls tweeted with delighted surprise and enjoyed the itchily furtive thought of sketching a nude body. Most of them longed for the courage to be models themselves. The models were very well paid, but the thought of the money was drab alongside the thrilling embarrassment of displaying their bodies. They did not dare, however—not quite yet—to start modelling, and the mere prospect of drawing a nude was pleasurable enough. They looked at Mr. Gregory, numb with excitement.

"Yes, I thought you'd be pleased," Mr. Gregory said. He ran a fond hand through his hair. It was very clean and very soft. "It makes a change, doesn't it, from these dreary little still lifes and unrewarding self-portraits. And, I might add, it does present a challenge. Yes . . . I was quite sure you'd be pleased," he repeated. He walked towards the door.

"We have a rather fortunate choice of models, too," he said. "Jane, my little girl, . . . you recall that we were chatting about her the other morning? . . . has consented to sit for us."

To the Picture of One
Who Looks well, well
Loved (adored) and
Well provided for

Tell me:
Who are you to trust a mirror
To tell time, to smile?
I don't doubt, but,
Fragile how you risk glass
To tell time, to smile.

Would water, say, a lake,
Be as accurate, as coy,
To tell time, to smile?
Would you doubt a lake—
With waves, as,
Say a mirror—cracked,
To tell time, to smile?

Who are you to trust a mirror
You've never broken,
To tell time, to smile,
To be accurate, as coy,
As, say, a lake—kissing
Two moist, deathmated flies?

And, then, again,
It could be you who asks
Who am I to be so accurate
Skipping rocks—across lakes;
On mirrors—others hold, others own.
Yet, here, tonight,
I see only a figure
gesticulating inarticulate
—Air in ice.

—Dennis Parks

A Garden Party

Mary loved me as she always loved
With crayon colors and butter smiles
She played the canoe girl in broad hat
Softly sliding through moss waters
Hoping for a kiss
Poised on the balls of her feet
She would rock on thin legs
Blinding ugliness to night
With her dawns and dusks
Silencing me
With her violet-eyed dreaming
Mary loved me as she knew how
That fingers-in-hair, flower-in-teeth sensitivity
Would always close with lips on cheek
But this world alone
Tropic in essence
Captured the arabesque rhythms of her beauty
So her episodes, her china flaunts frightened me
As rubbing her toes she would quote wysteria dust
and hum humid melodies
For this I piled the delicate flowers
around her cut-glass soul
But flowers of fragrant inadequacy
Stemless buds glancing at the reflection
Of afternoon.

—Leonidas Capetanos

Gertrude Hayes

Dear Somerset

There was a time when Teddy Jackson confused Somerset with God. When he was older he thought he might be a relative, possibly an uncle. "Somerset says," his mother called down from her end of the table, "most of our holidays are rooted in primitive tribal customs."

"Please," Mr. Jackson was carving the holiday turkey, "can't you spare us the oracle this once? It would give us all something to be thankful for."

"Somerset says," she insisted, "that the turkey may be a sublimation for an ancient cannibalistic rite practiced by our ancestors."

"Hm . . ." Mr. Jackson dismembered a wing. "They always stuffed the bird with minced mother-in-law."

"Teddy," his mother said, "take your elbows off the table and don't talk with a full mouth."

He swallowed. "Why don't you ever ask him over for dinner?"

"Who, dear?"

"Uncle Somerset."

Why had they laughed? He put it to his sister Joanie afterwards.

"Because he's not an uncle."

"What is he then?"

Joanie closed the door of the playroom. "He's her lover, stupid. Twice a week," she whispered. "It's called an assignation."

Well anyway, he wasn't an uncle. For some reason or other, shortly after his conversation with his sister, Teddy lost all curiosity about his family and Somerset. It was pre-adolescence, Mrs. Jackson said; a time, she explained, when a child goes underground. Teddy wasn't sure he understood: on the contrary he spent an awful lot of time on the ground—the school yard, the vacant lot, the ball park.

"I think," he said when he was fifteen, when he'd put aside childish games, "I think I'd like to sign up with Dr. Somerset."

Mrs. Jackson was outraged: "Really," she said, "going to an analyst is not like taking a course in ballroom dancing, or studying a foreign language, or perfecting your tennis. Besides the whole idea is ridiculous."

"You go, don't you?"

"But you don't need it. You're the most well-adjusted of my children."

"When I get married," his sister said, "I don't intend wasting my husband's money stretched out on somebody else's old couch. And if I feel alienated, or detached, I'll settle for a mink stole or black pearls; that's good enough therapy for me. I'm the narcissistic type, wouldn't you say, Mother?"

Her children, Mrs. Jackson observed, had acquired a rather clinical vocabulary. Where had they picked it up? Why even the baby when his father misplaced the car keys lisped: "It's Freudian, Dad."

Teddy didn't agree with his mother; he wasn't at all sure he was well-adjusted. The least she could do would be to discuss his problems once in a while with Dr. Somerset. She squandered plenty of those twenty-five-dollar hours on the rest of the family: Joanie's smoking, the baby's tantrums. His father, when he came home from the office, always asked, "Well, what did you tell him about me?"

"Dr. Somerset's time is too valuable," she answered.

"You telling me. Remember I pay for it."

But then of course, she has only been teasing. Later, she might say: "Harry, it really isn't necessary that you express your hostility by getting drunk at the club. If you don't like the members, we can drop out."

"Who says I don't like them? Do I need Somerset to tell me that!" he barked. But Teddy could see that his father was pleased. He decided his father was the one to talk to.

"It's no more expensive than sending me away to college, and it shouldn't take four years if I go twice a week."

"No, Son, I'm sorry. A college diploma will get you a job."

So Teddy took his entrance exams, filled out forms in which he described himself as a Buddhist, an agnostic, a vegetarian. Nevertheless, he was accepted.

"Harry," Mrs. Jackson cried, "what are we doing sending him three thousand miles away?"

"We're lucky," Mr. Jackson said, "there's a college that will take him."

"Children," she wept, "are only loaned to their parents."

"At a stiff rental."

"Oh, don't joke," she was desolate. "I'm going to be all alone."

"What? Don't tell me those other two kids who eat and sleep here aren't ours. I've been claiming them on my tax returns."

"I won't let him go."

He put his arm around her. "You still have me. And there's always Somerset."

From the way she was looking at him then, Teddy knew that finally his turn had come. "My poor boy," she said, "you have been going through a rough time, haven't you? You do resent Joanie wearing your sweaters and shirts?"

He nodded emphatically.

"And you're jealous of the baby?"

"Yes, yes."

"And of your father, too?"

"Certainly."

On Wednesday afternoon, Teddy didn't leave the house. He glanced at the clock. Ah, they'd be talking about him now. "A strange child," Somerset would say. "It will be a serious mistake to let him go away. Besides the smog will traumatize him. It will be a great sacrifice for you, Mrs. Jackson, but I suggest you give him your Wednesday and Friday appointments."

Teddy must have fallen asleep; he didn't hear his mother. She opened his door, switched on the overhead light. "Isn't it time," she said, "you were getting your trunk down from the attic?"

At dinner that evening she was thoughtful. "Would you believe it, Harry? Somerset has a fifty-nine-year-old patient who still can't leave his mother. Teddy doesn't realize how fortunate he is. He should be grateful that I've been able to help him cut the cord."

His last day at home she came into his room. "About your socks, darling, don't put them in the washing machine when you're at school. They'll shrink."

It hadn't occurred to him. He had planned to send everything to the laundry.

"Not your socks," she was emphatic. "They'll lose them."

All right he wouldn't send them to the laundry; where, then?

But she had checked that off on her list, gone on the next item. "Food: Be careful what you eat. . . ."

"For Heaven's sake," his father broke in, "if he can't be trusted to eat, how do you expect him to learn calculus!"

"About my socks," Teddy said.

"I don't want him to get sick with malnutrition. Hamburgers and French-fries are not a balanced diet."

"No," his father said, "but what a glorious death."

They drove him down to the airport. "You're not to worry about me, Teddy," she said. "I promise I'm not going to brood over all the terrible things that happen to boys in a strange city . . ."

At the terminal, Mr. Jackson looked at his watch. They had tickets for the racetrack that afternoon. When they'd said goodbye, when they walked away, Teddy heard his mother say, "Harry, betting is not a proper sublimation for alcohol."

His first plane. The jet took off and after a while he unfastened the safety belt. The socks! He'd forgotten to ask her. His stomach flipped. He'd wear them 'til they were black, fell off his feet. When he showed up at class without socks, would they expel him? I'm alone . . . he turned to the passenger beside him. The passenger was asleep over the eastern seaboard. I'm alone . . . He looked down the aisle for the stewardess. She offered him chewing-gum.

He took out a postcard from the seat-flap. Dear Somerset, he wrote. The plane took a sudden dip. He crossed out Somerset. Dear God: About my socks. . . .



Notes On Contributors————

Poetry

HENRY BIRNBAUM (*Terminations and Unspoken*) has been published in the *Quarterly* on several previous occasions. Other recent work of his appears in *The Humanist*, *Morning Star*, *Poetry* and *Western Humanities Review*.

LEONIDAS CAPETANOS (*The Garden Party*) is a sophomore majoring in English Literature. His poem, *F. Scott Fitzgerald*, was published in the *Quarterly's* spring issue.

RICHARD EBERHART (*Throwing the Apple*) is on leave of absence from Dartmouth, as Poetry Consultant at the Library of Congress. He read his poems at the University this past fall. A group of his poems appeared in *Poetry*, October, 1959, and his collected poems are scheduled to appear sometime this year.

CINDY McMICHAEL EGERTON (*Sambo*) is a junior majoring in English Literature at the University. Besides a story published earlier this year, this poem is her first published writing.

PARKER HODGES (*Two Men We've Wondered At and Marble Garden*) continues in Chapel Hill. In addition to *The Quarterly* his work has been published in *Flame* and *Spectrum*.

G. C. ODEN (*I Pledge Allegiance*) counts among her experiences writing fellowships from the John Hay Whitney Foundation and a fellowship to Yaddo, New York, as well as scholarship support to attend this summer's Bread Loaf writers' conference. Her poems have appeared in *Voices*, *Quicksilver*, *Half Moon*, *Poetry Digest*, and *The Saturday Review*.

DENNIS PARKS (*To the Picture of One Who Looks well . . .*) has been published in *The Carolina Quarterly* and *Spectrum*. He is now living in Arlington, Virginia.

RICHARD RICKERT (*On Hearing Richard Eberhart and For Rex-roth*) has studied at Washington University, St. Louis, with the editors of *Perspective*, and assisted with the all-poetry *Campus*

Review. He is resident in Chapel Hill for graduate studies in philosophy and literature. His poems have been published in *Reflections* and *The Fiddlehead*.

JONATHAN WILLIAMS (*3 Sit-ins Agin Out 'n Out S-its*) lives at Highlands, North Carolina, and is publisher of Jargon Books. More of his poems are in his very recent *Empire Finals at Verona*, published with collages by Fielding Dawson.

Articles

JOHN STROTHER CLAYTON (*The Sister Figure in the Works of Tennessee Williams*) is an associate professor in the Radio, Television, Motion Picture Department. He has written and directed numerous radio plays.

KENNETH REXROTH (*Three Articles On a Journey Through the South*) is a poet, translator, painter, and critic living in San Francisco. He is currently trying through his newspaper articles and KPFA radio program to break down the hidden Jim Crow attitudes in San Francisco. Among his books are *100 Poems from the Japanese*, *In Defense of the Earth*, *The Signature of All Things*, and *Bird in the Bush*. These are all published by New Directions.

Fiction

JOHN BACICH (*Confirmation*) received his A.B. from San Francisco State College in Creative Writing. Currently he is teaching evening classes at Diablo Valley College in Concord, California.

GERTRUDE HAYES (*Dear Somerset*) is a New Yorker. She has been previously published in "Artesian," and is currently working on a novel.

EMILY CRANDALL RUSHWORTH (*Jane*) is from Brooklyn, N. Y. This is her first story to be published by the *Quarterly*.

Drama

RALPH DENNIS (*Walking Boy*) recently received his A.B. in English at UNC and is a resident of Chapel Hill. He has just completed his first novel.

The Carolina Quarterly

ANNOUNCES ITS ELEVENTH ANNUAL AWARDS

\$50.00 Short Story Award and Two \$25.00 Poetry Awards

These cash prizes to be presented to the author of the short story and the author of the poems judged the best work published during the year, i.e., in any of the three issues of each volume. Recipients of the awards will be announced in the Summer issue, 1961.

Manuscripts, with return addressed, stamped envelope attached, should be sent to Nancy Combes, Fiction Editor, or Dick Rickert, Poetry Editor, THE CAROLINA QUARTERLY, P. O. Box 1117, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Chapel Hill's Famous Browcery Welcomes You

THE INTIMATE BOOKSHOP

119 E. Franklin St.

Open Till 9 P.M.

